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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["I LOVE YOU."]

TIME'S REVENGE; OR, FOILED AT THE LAST.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHAINS AMID THE ROSES.

All love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.

SHELLEY.

MR. ARUNDELL was an auctioneer and estate agent in a large way of business. He lived in a pretty villa at West Brompton, and seldom indulged in a holiday, but three important objects drew him down three or four times in every year to the insufferably stupid region of Cricklemore-cum-Starkles. The smallest motive power was a visit to Miss Ibbotson.

He had been appointed one of her trustees by her mother, and took an active interest in her affairs, his coadjutor having died some few years after the demise of Mrs. Ibbotson. Miss True had written to inform him of her approaching marriage, and was in hopes that he would not only be present on the auspicious day itself, but might be induced to perform the onerous duty of "giving her away."

Another circumstance that rendered Cricklemore-cum-Starkles attractive in the eyes of Mr. Arundell was the fact that within its limits resided two aged female relatives, great aunts,

or something of that kindred. These ladies possessed a large quantity of property in land and houses, and as they owned no existing relative but Henry Arundell and young Percy Darvill, his sister's son, the probability was that they would make a will favourable to the interests of those two gentlemen.

The third attraction was the hope of ultimately purchasing on advantageous terms a small property adjoining the principal land belonging to the two old ladies—the owner of which had been at once anxious and reluctant for some years to sell. Should the property belonging to the ancient sisters come to Mr. Arundell, this addition would double its value, while it would be an excellent investment in any case.

To arrive before midday might appear an unusual proceeding, but there was no choice in the matter of trains. Passengers were allowed to come in the morning and about nine o'clock in the evening, but at no intermediate time during the day. On this visit, Mr. Arundell came with more than ordinarily definite motives. Miss Ibbotson had requested him to look out for an eligible—indeed for any available—situation for one or both of her girls, and he had found an unusually promising chance for Beattie. She was his favourite, and he was conscious that she would be sure to command attention wherever she went. He had unexpectedly met, too, with an advantageous, safe speculation, which would materially increase Miss Ibbotson's income if she cared to invest in it.

Percy Darvill had of late always accompanied Mr. Arundell on his visits to Cricklemore-cum-Starkles, making any lame excuse that came to hand. Why Percy did so, Mr. Arundell very

soon discovered, for he had a keen eye and a quick observation. But he had not as yet satisfactorily discerned which particular loadstone drew his nephew—the soft, low-voiced Imogenesque Fayette, or the imperial, Cleopatra Beattie.

For a reason he was ashamed to own to himself, he would have preferred to see the young man choose Fayette. Deep down in his heart, Mr. Arundell was aware there nestled a feeling that would have led him to risk blighting the future of Beattie with his own, in spite of every common-sense argument, had he seen the slightest likelihood of obtaining her affection as a wife.

Very little excuse was needed for this unexpected visit. Mr. Arundell's visits generally were unannounced, as he rarely could be sure of having an opportunity of getting away from town. He had innumerable engagements, and was one of those honest hearty Englishmen who feel a keen delight in hard work.

Gervase Fordham seldom had the absurdity to present himself at The Sycamores before a tolerably advanced hour in the afternoon, but this morning he had received a letter, informing him of a sudden and most favourable turn in his affairs, and he had dutifully hastened to communicate the pleasing intelligence to his ladylove.

He was summoned to London, and must remain absent for a few days, leaving to-morrow; but there was nothing very trying about this temporary separation. Having received this news, Miss Ibbotson informed her lover of the change in her own domestic affairs. They were speaking of these important matters when Mr. Arundell and his nephew came in.

Miss Ibbotson rose to greet the new comers eagerly. Mr. Arundell was no great favourite with Gervase Fordham, but this feeling of silent antagonism was scarcely evident. Mr. Fordham stood on the now antiquated white bearskin, which did duty as a hearthrug in Miss Prue's drawing-room, spreading himself out to look as much like the master of the house as possible, his gold chain and lockets sparkling aggressively against his broad white waistcoat, his large, black whiskers ostentatiously defiant.

Miss Prue liked his self assertive, arrogant way. She imagined it showed her future spouse to be a manly, thoroughly-well-able-to-do-battle-against-the-whole-world kind of personage, one to whom others might look up as a superior, and on whom she could herself rely for advice and protection on all occasions.

Mr. Fordham disliked Mr. Arundell on the Doctor Fell principle—a handy one when the hater does not find it convenient to stand face to face with his own self and ask disagreeable questions.

Miss Prue allowed Gervase to drift into an idle talk with Percy Darvill—another gentleman on his Doctor Fell list—while she eagerly drew Mr. Arundell into one of the deep embayed windows. She could hardly let him tell her of his success in the interests of Beattie, so anxious was she to inform him of the young girl's altered prospects.

Mr. Arundell listened in amazement—not altogether unmixed with a faint dash of a feeling scarcely to be defined—not disappointment or a sensation of chill, but something some stations distant from joyful sympathy, and partaking of the nature of those sentiments.

"Dear Mr. Arundell," Miss Prue went on, laying her thin white hand on his sleeve unconsciously to arrest his heat attention, "dear friend, may I beg one more favour, one more kindness, in addition to all you have so freely given me?"

"Speak, dear Miss Prudence. If I can do anything for you or for either of our two charming and amiable girls, it will give me the greatest possible pleasure," replied Mr. Arundell, his eyes bent downwards, his voice soft and kindly.

"My fears and doubts are over for Beattie," Miss Ibbotson proceeded. "But for Faye, poor child, she has, I plainly foresee, a time of bitter trouble before her. She is so gentle, so docile, that she will not be able to battle for herself. She will fall into the hands of her mother."

"Her mother!" echoed Mr. Arundell, unfeigned surprise, even amazement, in every feature. "I thought her mother was—was dead."

"So everybody thought," said Miss Ibbotson with some acrimony. "But it seems she is still alive, for I had a letter from her this morning. To-morrow she will come to take away our little Faye."

"You use—pray pardon me—you use strange language. Just now you said she will fall into the hands of her mother. Who so natural a caretaker for a girl as a mother? Has the woman disgraced herself?"

"I will tell you—Hush! here comes Faye," and Miss Ibbotson made a sign of caution. "By-and-bye," she hastily added, in the same undertone as that in which she had already spoken.

Cold and cruel, indeed, must have been the heart which could have desired or foretold a painful destiny for so fair, so bright a creature as the girl who stood half hesitatingly on the little white furry mat just within the doorway.

She looked like the impersonation of all that was pleasant and sunshiny without, seeming to bring with her the fresh fragrance of the garden from whence she came. In the simplest of morning dresses, her long, fair hair falling in rippled waves over her shoulders, and down her back after the manner of a modern nymph, deep violet eyes, glancing with shy welcome on the three visitors, her swelling red lips parted sufficiently to permit a gleam of pearly teeth; her face, her attitude, her every gesture full of that innocent, truthful grace and expression which

generally departs with the last days of childhood, Fayette was at that moment a perfectly charming image. Painter or sculptor might have rejoiced to take her as the model of a pure and beautiful guardian angel. Mr. Gervase Fordham favoured her with his usual patronising smile. He was rather fond of smiling, as he happened to be endowed with noticeably fine white teeth, and did not dislike to draw attention to that circumstance.

Mr. Arundell went to meet her, both his hands outstretched, taking masculine advantage of his age and privileged friendship since her earliest days to kiss her on the forehead, while he made inquiries as to her welfare, a certain additional tenderness of manner being induced by the startling hints Miss Ibbotson had allowed to escape.

Percy Darvill was the last to address Fayette. He looked, as did the others, beyond the graceful, sunny figure, as if surprised that the stately presence of Beattie was nowhere visible.

Mr. Darvill was a remarkably fine young fellow of some four or five and twenty years of age. Tall and fair, with particularly broad shoulders, and a strong, self-reliant air about him pleasant to see. His face, naturally delicate in complexion as that of a girl, was sunburnt as that of a young farmer. His honest, dark blue eyes were keen and penetrating, yet full of a sparkling light easily transfused to laughter.

He was altogether an unusually handsome example of a middle-class Englishman, decidedly modelled after the young Greek god type: a perfectly symmetrical figure, and features regularly cut as those of an antique statue. He had not asked for Beattie, trusting that, as had always happened, both girls would appear together. But when Fayette came in alone he looked visibly disconcerted. His voice faltered slightly as he spoke to her.

"How do you do, Miss Lascelles? I hope you are quite well? You look charmingly. I—I hope—your cousin Miss Beatrice is quite well?"

"Oh yes, I thought she was coming in. She will be here presently. I believe she ran upstairs to see if her canaries were all right for the day. You know how careful she is of her birds," said Fayette, looking at him with her serene, sunny smile.

Percy Darvill felt vexed with himself for not having had the patience to wait. But nearly three months had passed since he had seen Beattie; he was desperately in love, and patience was not his distinguishing characteristic. He fancied he looked stupid, so did not make any remark. Fayette went on, unconscious that she was going to electrify her hearer.

"We are going away to-morrow."

"Going away!" echoed Percy—then stopped, and looked at Fayette in blank astonishment.

"Yes. You are surprised? We are surprised."

"Who are we? I knew your aunt was going to be married, and I knew—I mean I thought—Mr. Arundell told me there would be serious changes here; but I didn't think you were all going so soon. But—may I ask who you mean by we?"

"Beattie—and me."

"Indeed. But isn't it rather—rather sudden, Miss Faye?"

"Very sudden. So sudden that I can't realise it yet."

"But—but I don't understand."

"I hardly understand myself. I think hardly any of us understand yet," said Fayette, a little sadly. "A letter came about me from my mother, whom we all thought—you know, Mr. Darvill, they believed my mother died when I was a babe of a child," she explained, in a subdued, semi-confidential tone.

"You amaze me, Miss Fayette. You know you have all been so kind, you have always treated me just like one of the family—so you must not be displeased if I claim to be allowed to take an interest. But—this seems—"

"My mother wrote to say she would come for me to-morrow. If you like, you may read her letter."

"If I like? I should indeed."

Percy took the cold, brief letter containing the programme of arrangements laid down by Mrs. Lascelles, and read it very carefully.

"By Jove! I never was more—more—I don't know what to say. But Beattie—Miss Allenby—this doesn't concern her?"

"No. Her father—"

"Faye!"

"Yes. Nothing will ever seem surprising again, Mr. Percy. Beattie's father has written to say he is now very rich; he is now Sir—oh, I forget—Sir Something Allenby, and Aunt Faye says Beattie is a most fortunate girl."

"Oh, Fayette—Miss Lascelles—" Percy Darvill's voice and face were full of real consternation. "And Miss Prue will let you both go?" he went on.

"She cannot help it, I suppose. But" Fayette interrupted herself, gaily, "we are not gone yet. And we must go some time or other."

"But—but it can't be real. Where are you going?"

"I don't know—"

"And Beatrice—"

"I don't know that either."

"It seems so surprising," concluded Percy, no other idea being forthcoming. "Faye, look here—will you listen to me for a moment? I have something of the first importance to tell you about."

The door was slightly ajar, and the *fron-frou* of frilled skirts was distinctly heard from stair to stair, descending. Miss Prue turned her head sharply as the sound caught her ear.

"If that child haan't gone and put on her Sunday frock and petticoat," she indignantly thought.

Beattie appeared, framed as Fayette had been some minutes before. She made as lovely a picture against the dark background of the oak-panelled door, with sprays of the illus in the wide, old-fashioned hall without as a kind of "pre-Raphaelite" adjunct. With incredible comeliness, she had changed her print morning gown for her fine muslin frock and white frilled muslin underskirt, and looked undoubtedly much the better for the metamorphosis. Dress and adornment effected very little difference in Fayette, who was always herself, but with Beattie they were all-important. Queens need royal robes.

Her tall, slender, perfectly straight figure was stately and dignified as that of an ideal queen. Unlike Fayette, whose complexion was like that of a delicate blush rose, she was almost marble white, with features exquisitely carved as those of a cameo. Her dark, abundant hair was bound round her classic head with a statuette severity.

"No princess trained in courts ever floated into a salon with a more self-possessed, half insolent grace than Beattie advanced with, armed at all points like a confident Diana. She nearly shut her black eyes, with the artfulness of a cat, and glanced at Percy Darvill for a second, then, pretending to ignore his existence, opened her eyes very wide, and beamed with sublime innocence on Mr. Arundell, who had not seen that momentary shaft of light glitter past him.

"My dear," said the old gentleman, taking her hand between both his, but not attempting or venturing to kiss her, "I find I have to congratulate you on a very unexpected accession to wealth and station. I came down with the offer of a rather agreeable position as 'companion' for you, but happily that is no longer of value to you."

Beattie's eyes shot another rapid glance at Percy Darvill. The poor fellow was impatiently waiting for the chance to speak to her, and was totally unaware that Fayette had left him, and was at the opposite side of the room. But Miss Allenby replied to the friendly observation of Mr. Arundell with a frank, unruffled smile.

"It seems so strange, dear Mr. Arundell. Like one of the old fairy tales—quite. I suppose Aunt Faye has told you all about it?"

"Only mentioned the crude facts, my dear child. I am anxiously waiting for the rough outline to be finished with details. Come, sit down here and tell me the story."

Beattie looked down, and hesitated. Patience was not Miss Allenby's distinguishing characteristic any more than Mr. Darvill's, and it was appalling at that moment to contemplate allowing herself to be monopolised for half an hour or more by even so kind a friend as the old gentleman who was smiling upon her.

"I know nothing about it," she said, "I never knew anything about my father, beyond the fact that he went abroad while I was a little girl 'so high,' as the children say. He has just come home, is rich—is—he wants me—as is quite natural, you know, dear Mr. Arundell. I will let you see his letter presently."

"No time like the present, my dear."

"Dear me—I have left it upstairs," said Beattie, almost trembling with vexation.

"Very well, very well. We must have a talk about it by-and-bye."

Beattie had already responded to the mute salutation offered by Percy Darvill, in her own way. She now drifted a few steps towards him, meeting on a neutral ground, near one of the windows opening on the garden. Nobody was paying any attention, so Percy Darvill caught both Beattie's hands, and looked earnestly, searching, at her. Miss Beattie glanced this way and that, like a half frightened bird, then her eyes met his with a sort of laughing welcome. Lovers do not need, they do not like, formal greetings and inquiries.

"You are going away?" abruptly said Percy Darvill. "Where are you going?"

"I cannot tell you," said Beattie, smiling.

"Fay tells me your father has become a rich and great man."

"I believe it is so. He wants me now. We had a letter from him this morning." Beattie repeated the substance of the letter. Percy listened, without making the slightest remark. "You know," the young girl continued, "in any case, when Aunt Prue married—and she will be married in a few weeks—we must, Faye and I, have left her, so it will not make much difference."

"How do you mean, it won't make much difference?" asked Percy, as if rousing from a painful reverie. "It seems to me it must make as much difference as between light and darkness."

Beattie looked at him with surprise. He spoke in apparent anger, which somewhat mystified her.

"Well, of course it makes a difference one way," she admitted.

"You will go; you will forget all your old friends—those who knew and loved you," said Percy, with sudden bitterness.

"Why should you say so?" demanded Beattie, her dark eyes flashing at the reproof. They were alone now, having wandered from the room into the quaint old-fashioned garden while speaking. "Why should you judge me so harshly, so unjustly?"

He caught her hands, and pressed them against his breast with vehemence.

"Beattie," he said, eagerly, passionately, "tell me one thing; do you think you will forget that you have left one faithful heart behind you, in going to your new and splendid home?"

"You speak as if I should never see any of my friends again," she exclaimed, in alarmed accents. "Why do you frighten me so? Do you think my new-found father will prove a tyrant, to forbid me to look back on those that I have lived with—those I have known, when he—why do you talk such nonsense? It is very unlike you."

The little talk she had looked for with Percy had turned out very differently to what poor Beattie had anticipated. She had flown to her room, adorned herself, and came down glowing, her heart beating with delight to think she had such wonderful news to tell; and now they were nearly quarrelling. Little did she dream that it was only the thought that her unexpected elevation had so far removed her from him that he felt obliged to stifle the words of love, the eager offer of marriage which he had meant to lay at her feet, for his position, his income, were very undefined at the present moment. Tears rose in her brilliant eyes.

"I have not seen him for three months," she thought, "and he is like this?"

Percy caught sight of the tears as she averted her face, and forgot his prudent resolve.

"Beattie," he whispered, "I love you, and I must lose you. One word, one look—"

"Beattie!" cried Miss Prue, at that moment approaching the glass doors, and speaking rather crossly; "come here, child. Why have you not shown Mr. Arundell your father's letter?"

Other people's little flirtations or love episodes were nothing to Miss Prue. In the present instance she was absolutely indifferent, if not blind, but as a general rule she dearly liked to throw a few buckets of cold water to help in making the course of true love slightly swampy, or a few handfuls of macadam to roughen the way a little.

It was a particularly awkward moment to have chosen for a declaration of love, and Percy half regretted his precipitation. Beattie hesitated for a moment or two, then, as Aunt Prue did not see exactly where she was, owing to the thickness of the intervening shrubs, made a step forward to escape. Percy laid a detaining hand on her arm to stop her flight.

"Only one word," Beattie, he whispered in her ear. "You love me, do you not?"

With the perversity of a young girl who has obtained what she has anxiously longed for, she would not vouchsafe either word or glance, but fled away, her soul lifted into an ecstasy of joy and tremulous delight. Aunt Prue took a few steps into the garden to reconnoitre and abruptly came upon Percy, who was fixed in most interested apiaristic observation at a respectful distance from the two great bee-hives.

"Mr. Darvill?" she said, sharply, "pray what has become of Beattie? She was with you here, was she not?"

"She was here just now, Miss Ibbetson," tranquilly responded Mr. Darvill; "but she went away."

"Went away! Oh, indeed. The girl's head is fairly turned. That, however, is not much to be wondered at. Do you know, Mr. Darvill, she is Sir Hubert Allenby's only daughter, and must one day be his heiress, and he is now worth about twenty-two thousand a year? She does not know anything about her riches, for I had not time to explain it to her; but still, she knows enough to make her half crazy."

The stalwart, firm-willed Percy sat looking helplessly bewildered as any abashed school-girl. Had a mine exploded at his feet he could hardly have felt more absolutely confounded. This morning he had left home with the fixed determination of asking Beattie to engage herself to him.

He had not taken Mr. Allenby into his confidence, for which want of frankness he had twenty excellent reasons. That Beattie would make no objection he was quite sure. In their childhood they had been playmates, in early youth the best of friends, and it had only been of late years that any constraint had arisen to fetter the pleasant freedom of their friendship.

"She leaves you to-morrow, I understand?" he stammered, confusedly.

"To-morrow!" contemptuously echoed Miss Prue. "If the girls go in a week I shall be very much surprised."

This was a respite. Miss Ibbetson returned to her other guests, discontented and vexed. Percy Darvill sat still and stared at the bees. All his bright hopes and dreams were dashed to the ground. He was tongue-tied now until the way was a little clearer. Beattie was happy as any bird skimming in early sunlight. No doubt, no fear, oppressed her heart.

"My life," she whispered to herself, "is turning out like a beautiful fairy tale, or a delightful dream. I wish I could have Fayette quietly to myself, that we might talk about this wonderful change. Poor Fay! I wish we were going together."

But there was no chance that day of a quiet, sisterly talk, though it might be the last opportunity they should ever have. Mr. Allenby proposed that the little party of six should have a waggonette and go for a good long drive. He

suggested to Miss Ibbetson that it was suggested occasion, that they had a magnificent day, and that it would be a pleasant recollection. The modest expenses he insisted should fall on himself.

After some consideration this proposition was agreed to. The housemaid, Phoebe, was directed to go down to the "Three Jolly Ploughboys" inn and order the waggonette, with a basket of provisions for luncheon. As Aunt Prue was upstairs with the girls to dress she explained that she had no intention of letting their relatives carry them off in so summary a fashion as they threatened.

"You will go when I please," she said, "but ably, and not an hour sooner."

The drive proved a real treat. Some of the loveliest scenery lay around for miles. Within easy reach was a venerable pile of ruins, the ivy-covered walls of a medieval priory. Here the party alighted and enjoyed the refreshments they had brought in the waggonette.

They wandered about for an hour on the outskirts of a shady wood. Miss Prue and Gervase Fordham paired off together. The girls kept together, Mr. Allenby on one side, Percy Darvill on the other. There was no chance of altering this arrangement, although Beattie and her lover would have liked to have done so. The girls naturally talked almost without cessation of the totally unexpected turn life had taken since the morning.

By the time the party again drove up to The Sycamores it was six o'clock, and Patsy Brown, having recovered her good humur, and having been given carte blanche, had the nicest little dinner imaginable ready.

CHAPTER IV.

BACK FROM THE DIM PAST.

We both have backward trod the paths of fate,
To meet again in life.

CONGRATULATIONS.

ABOUT an hour after dinner, just as the radiant sunlight began to fade into silvery neutral tints, with gleaming golden dashes of colour on the topmost boughs of the trees, Fayette wandered into the garden lying in front of the house. Aunt Prue was talking to Gervase Fordham. Of course, "spooning," as Gervase mentally termed the meandering dialogue.

Mr. Arundell had fallen asleep in the big armchair, an occasional snore betrayed that fact. Beattie was playing softly in the twilight at the far end of the long old-fashioned drawing-room, her white fingers straying through odd snatches of the Songs without Words, or Beethoven's sonatas. Percy sat by her, and these two young people seemed to forget that anybody existed in the world besides themselves.

Fayette had a headache—a very unusual visitation with her. The fragrant evening air, the serene sky, the mystical, dreamy shadows, the soft, sweet scents from the flowers, rising like a wordless, soundless litany, as the heat and oppression of the day drifted off—the quietude and calm assuaged her, and she knew she would not be missed if she stole away for a little while.

Her heart felt strange and foreboding; perhaps from the reaction consequent on the excitement of the eventful day. A great black retriever—Roy—which was invariably chained up during the daytime, but allowed to range about after sunset, bounded to meet her, having just been loosened by Phoebe. A splendid creature was Roy, with velvety paws, and deep, insatiable, almost human eyes.

A very sedate, well-educated quadruped, too, so, after indulging in a short series of gymnastic exercises for his own private enjoyment, and no evidence of affectionate feelings towards the one member of the household who was his special favourite, Roy slackened his rampant paces to suit the slow steps of Fayette.

The young girl looked like some fair spirit, walking dreamily to and fro in the subdued light in that half wild garden, the illusory effect being heightened by the soft, white

peries defining as much as concealing her figure.

Having paced backwards and forwards many times, Fayette rambled down to one of the tall iron gates, and leaning her head against the cool bars gazed out upon the road—a wide dusty highway, straight and particularly uninteresting, with prosaic fields ranging on the opposite side. There was nothing to see.

There never was anything to see, excepting sometimes in the morning the butcher's cart or pony and the various conveyances of other tradespeople from the village. Precisely opposite to the gate lay a cross road or bridle path lined with blackberry hedges which marked the limits of fields and meadows branching off on either side.

This path led in a direct line to Crane Wood. The trees forming the wood stood out in relief against the opalescent sky in rich masses of varied green, from the pale tints of the silvery larch to the sombre hues of the grand old oak.

To Fayette's child-like mind the world, that busy, bustling arena which, in common with all young girls, she earnestly longed to enter, had always seemed to be beyond those heaped up billows of green and brown. She had asked what place was behind that mysterious curtain of foliage, always hearing with vexation the invariable answer—" Chipstone-on-Marsham." And beyond? she had inquired; only to receive another dry, unattractive, topographical direction.

Fayette had no lover, although she was so winning, so amiable, and so beautiful. There was nobody at Cricklemore-cum-Starkles for whom she could reasonably be expected to care. It was a region unusually destitute of young men, eligible or ineligible. The widowed, childless owner of the Hall had lived for years abroad—besides being past fifty, so he could not fairly be counted.

The rector's only son, who was some five or six years older than Percy Darvill, had entered the Church and departed for a distant city, with "views" rabidly "high"; the celibacy of the clergy being among his most cherished points of doctrine. Neither were there any pretty or interesting girls about. So there was little to regret in leaving Cricklemore-cum-Starkles.

Yet, in this tranquil, soothing light, the familiar scents from the garden about her, the evening song of the birds, to which she had listened from earliest childhood—the foreboding, the vague reluctance to sudden change which the calm restful evening brings so often, fell upon her timid heart.

As her gaze wandered over the quiet scene without Fayette became suddenly conscious of the approach of a solitary figure—that of a female, who was walking slowly along the narrow footpath.

It was the figure of a stranger, for Fayette knew everyone living in or near Cricklemore-cum-Starkles, if not as an acquaintance, at least, by sight and name. Fayette was much surprised by this apparition. With curious eyes she idly watched its progress, until the dark-robed figure was sufficiently within view to enable her to distinguish details of appearance.

A tall, slender woman, a lady, one would say—dressed in dark grey habiliments not unfashionably made, though without pretension. A woman with blonde hair, and a face still retaining traces of great beauty, though long, and decidedly thin and worn.

It was an odd time for a strange lady to be rambling alone across those deserted fields, and Fayette unconsciously watched as the figure slowly walked up the path. Then she lost sight of it, for the person, whoever she might be, struck across by a still narrower path on the other side of the hedge, and vanished.

Fayette, followed by Roy, turned to go again into the house, when a faint yet sharp and clear cry arrested her attention. She paused, but the cry was not repeated.

"I must have been mistaken," she said, aloud.

But she still lingered, anticipating that, perhaps, a second cry might break on the soft sum-

mer stillness of the air. A quick patter-patter step from the left made her move quickly again to her post of observation at the gate, preceded by Roy, who began barking furiously. A girl of about fourteen was half running in the direction taken by the stranger, but stopped on seeing Fayette's white figure.

"Look, look, miss!" she exclaimed, pointing with a chubby brown finger. "That lady's just tumbled trying to get over the stile. I think she's killed herself, for she's a lying down quite still."

(To be Continued.)

A RACE FOR HONOUR. (A DOUBLE PROPHETY FOR 1880.)

A was the All-right that started the crew,
B was Ben Beaky who steer'd the Dark Blue;
C the Conservatives all of a row,
D was the Doings they found was no go;
E the Enlightenment swamping the boat,
F was the Feeling that had kept it afloat;
G was the Go in them almost exhausted,
H was the House looking cheerless and frosted;
I was the Indian affairs in a muddle,
J was the Jingo Conservatives cuddle;
K was the Kind cheers that hailed the Light Blue,
L was the Liberals composing its crew;
M was the Mire Tories placed in their way,
N was the News they were gaining the day;
O was the Order in which they were placed,
P was the Pleasure with which they were traced;
Q the Quietus they gave the Dark Blue,
R the Rejoicing that hailed the brave crew;
S was the Story the Tories had told,
T was the Trade of the country they'd sold;
U was the Union in the new ranks,
V was the Vain Tory State tricks and pranks;
W was the Welcome all gave with delight,
X was the Xmas which saw them all right;
Y was the Year bringing plenty we lack,
Z was the Zeal that had brought it us back.

O. P.

SCIENCE.

"HOW STEEL HARDENS."

The above is the title page of a paper read before a recent meeting of the Engineers Association by its president, Mr. William Metcalf, who is also a prominent steel manufacturer. The gentleman has for years expended thought and time upon the topic, assisted in the chemical bearings of the subject by Professor Langley. The paper awakened a deep interest among the iron and steel men of Pittsburg, and is an exhaustive treatise. The conclusions arrived at by Mr. Metcalf and Mr. Langley are embodied in the concluding portion of the paper, in which the authors express the opinion that it has been clearly shown:

1st. That a good soft heat is safe to use, if steel be immediately and thoroughly worked. It is a fact that good steel will endure more pounding than any iron.

2nd. If steel be left long in the fire it will lose

its steely nature and grain, and assume the nature of cast iron. Steel should never be kept hot any longer than necessary for the work to be done.

3rd. Steel is entirely mercurial under the action of heat, and a careful study of the tables will show that there must, of necessity, be an injurious internal strain created whenever two or more parts of the same piece are subjected to different temperatures.

4th. It follows that when steel has been subjected to heat not absolutely uniform over the whole mass, careful annealing should be resorted to.

5th. As the change of volume, due to a varied degree of heat, increases directly and rapidly with the quantity of carbon present, therefore high steel is more liable to dangerous internal strains than low steel, and great care should be exercised in the use of high steel.

6th. Hot steel should always be put in a perfectly dry place of even temperature while cooling. A wet place in the floor might be sufficient to cause serious injury.

7th. Never let anyone mislead you with the statement that his steel possesses a peculiar property which enables it to be "restored" after being burned. No more should you waste any money on nostrums for "restoring" burned steel. We have shown how to restore "overheated" steel. For burned steel, which is oxidised steel, there is only one way of restoration, and that is, through the knabbling fire or the blast furnace. Overheating and restoring should only be allowable for the purpose of experiment. The process is one of disintegration, and is always injurious.

8th. Be careful not to overdo the annealing process; if carried too far, it does great harm, and it is one of the commonest modes of destruction which the steel maker meets in his daily troubles. It is hard to induce the average worker in steel to believe that very little annealing is necessary, and that a very little is really more efficacious than a great deal.

Finally, it is obvious that, as steel is governed by certain and invariable laws in all of the changes mentioned, which laws are not yet as clearly defined as they should be, nor as they will be; nevertheless, the fact that there are such laws, should give us confidence in the use of the material, because we may be sure of reaching reliable results by the proper observance of these laws. Therefore there is no good reason why engineers should be afraid to use steel if they manipulate it intelligently. Now, if we have wandered over a wide range in answer to the simple question, "Why does steel harden?" it was necessary to have looked at many facts before we could have an intelligent opinion of many theories; and if any are in doubt as to what is the correct answer to this momentous question, we only say that we are all "in the same boat," for if you do not know, neither do we.

HOW TO MAKE TIGHT TARRED PAPER ROOFS.

Have the lower layer of paper that comes next to the boards without tar or dressing of any kind (plain paper), then over that three layers of tarred paper. When the tarred paper is laid on the boards of the roof it adheres firmly to the boards, and when they come to shrink (as they always do) the paper is torn at the joints between the boards, especially if wide lumber is used the fracture is greater. Plain paper does not adhere to the boards, and they are allowed to shrink or expand without damaging the roof. I have tried it and know that a roof put on in this way will remain tight twice as long as when the tarred paper is laid next to the boards, besides it entirely prevents the dripping of tar through the cracks of the roof in hot weather. The extra expense is a mere trifle, not a shilling each square of 100 feet.—H.

THE Prince of Wales has been unanimously re-elected Grand Master of English Freemasons.



[UNTAMED.]

AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love," &c., &c.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PRISONER.

Cruel and tiger like, graceful and sleek,
With eyes flashing fire, yet tones mild and meek,
In life's solemn farce he plays out his vile part,
This man without conscience, or pity, or heart.

"My dear Aileen, if that kind of proceeding amuses you, you are perfectly at liberty to divert yourself in that way. We can easily substitute calico curtains when you have destroyed those satin ones in your pretty pastime. The last fair occupant of this villa was a most charming corypheé named Crystalette. She had wonderfully extravagant tastes. I have known her to give a guinea apiece for peaches, and then fling them into the mud by the dozen to the street arabs as a reward to them for turning somersaults by the side of her carriage, and she wouldn't drink wine if she fancied it cost less than a guinea a bottle; also she never would wear buttons to her dresses unless they were of eighteen carat gold, even for morning costume, while for evening dress she insisted on their being diamonds, rubies or sapphires. She was a most extravagant little witch, and her whims cost me six hundred pounds a month, yet she was starving in a garret in Oxford Market when I knew her first, and I swear I believe she had only one pair of stockings in the world, corypheé though she was. Now I rescued her from that condition, and she repaid me with the most piquant and graceful ingratitude. She was certainly a charming little creature,

but then she was not half as pretty as you are. You only want costuming, my flower of Erin, to make you as renowned a beauty in the demi-monde as was Lady Emily Fairleigh in the upper classes of society."

"Do not speak, my lord, of honourable women, be they beautiful ladies or good-looking country girls, in the same breath with unhappy creatures like Crystalette," cried Aileen.

"Unhappy creatures! Ah, poor child, you don't know what a merry madcap Crystalette was—and is; what a fortune she is saving up in spite of her extravagance."

"Hush, hush! I will not hear one word!" cried Aileen, "not one. Nothing shall make me listen to your fine talk. If you could give me the kingdom of England in exchange for my self-respect I would spurn the gift with my feet—yes, I would rather die; I would rather be cut in pieces than listen to your most wicked words!"

Lord Athlone's fair face grew very pale as Aileen spoke thus. There was an impassioned earnestness about the girl which showed him with his penetration and knowledge of the world that Aileen hated and scorned him, rich lordling though he was, and his inordinate vanity suffered terribly. What "love," as he called it, he entertained for Aileen touched already the borders of hate.

"If I don't conquer her, by George, I will kill her!" he said in his wicked heart. "She shan't ride roughshod over me in this fashion. I will humble her into the dust. She has nobody who cares particularly to look after her, I should imagine. The peasant lover was jealous of sweet brother Ted, and is gone to enliven the Yankees with his charming society. I would far rather she were dead than alive and defying me as she is doing. You have a hot temper, my dear Aileen—a very hot temper," said Lord Athlone, as he sank languidly into a chair, "but I am not a bit afraid of hot tempers, not a bit. I have a hot temper myself." His sleepy blue eyes flashed. "But I have learned to keep it under control; a temper

like yours, Aileen, is apt to run away with one like a restive horse, and fling one against the kerbstone on one's head. Now you will have to remain in this house as long as I choose—as long as ever I choose," he repeated, in prim, emphatic tones. "Don't think that I am a man to be turned from my purpose. I have set my heart on winning you, and win you I will. I don't care how long I have to wait, but conquer you I will."

"I have gone through perils almost as bad before," said Aileen, "and my courage has never sunk. I am quite as determined as you are, my Lord Athlone. You may kill me if you like, but I will never stoop to shame!"

"Why hang it all!" cried Lord Athlone, "I believe if my straw-coloured beauty wife were dead, and how tired I am of her to be sure, I believe that if I were even a widower, and asked you to become Lady Athlone, that you are such a little demon that you would refuse. Speak! Would you?"

"My lord, you speak like an idiot or a madman!" was the certainly aggravating reply of Aileen.

"And you mean by that, of course," said Lord Athlone, "that if I were single you would marry me in order to become Lady Athlone?"

"No. I would not marry you if you became a widower and King of England, Lord Athlone; I hate you too much!"

Lord Athlone muttered a terrible oath.

"You are an insulting jade!" he said, with a smile, "but you are the prettiest woman in England, and I will conquer you. I don't intend to lodge you luxuriously or feed you with dainties; you shall have nothing whatever to eat till this time to-morrow, then we will see how you look, and we will hear what you say. Hunger, you know, is a grim fact at this moment existing in your own country. During the twenty-four hours that must elapse between now and this time to-morrow, you may amuse yourself by thinking that you are suffering in company with the poor souls in Donegal. You shan't have a crumb of bread nor a spoonful of

milk for twenty-four hours. Then I will see you again, and if you are still in the same mind we will try the effect of the same prescription for another twenty-four hours. If you like to die in defence of your principles as an example of ferocious virtue, you are, I assure you, perfectly welcome to do so. Allow me to say good-afternoon."

And Lord Athlone arose, bowed, went to the panel, slid it back, and then passing through he was lost to the sight of Aileen. There was something in the cold and deadly determination of his manner that struck the girl with a certain sensation of horror.

She felt all at once a deathly chill, although the luxurious room was warmed with hot air pipes. She was left alone now. If she liked she might pull down those canary satin curtains, break those treasures of Dresden on the cabinets, break her wrath and indignation on what in her soul she called the "hateful finesse" of my lord's apartment. She did nothing of the kind; she sat down and buried her face in her hands and began to think.

"How am I to get away?" she asked herself. "The door is locked; that sliding panel opens only on the other side. Besides, he is in there—that unfeeling noble. What shall I do—the window?"

Then she went to the window. She found that outside was a very fine gold wirework like a bird's cage close to the glass. This did not obstruct the view, but it made it impossible to escape even had she possessed the courage to take a tremendous leap into the garden. The window looked from the side of the house into a secluded portion of the grounds surrounding the villa, a plot of grass thickly planted with shrubs, and the view at the bottom out of it by a row of tall, strong firs and other evergreens.

"If somebody would only cross that grass to whom I could make a sign," said poor Aileen to herself. "But even then perhaps the person could not see me through this gold wire, and if I were seen the person would most likely be only one of my lord's creatures."

Nevertheless poor Aileen stood for three weary hours and watched the dreary garden in hopes of seeing some human soul pass, and not a single creature came in sight. Only once she saw a large black dog gambolling and rolling on the grass, but evidently somebody called him away, for he soon ran off with his tail between his legs.

Aileen then went and sat down and gave way to weeping. All sorts of wild ideas entered her head. She fancied when twilight fell, and ghostly shadows began to fill the room, that the whole was but a hideous fancy, "the fabric of which dreams are made."

"Oh, if I could only waken and find it was not true; if I could wake in my little room in Belgrave Square, or in my room with kind Miss Godfrey at Athlone Castle; I was safe with her."

Aileen felt now very drowsy, but she was afraid to go to sleep. Any moment that panel might slip aside and Lord Athlone might enter, so she passed some hours of darkness in that splendid prison in a state of wakeful terror. At length, however, fatigue conquered. She lay down on a soft satin couch, covered herself with her cloak, and sank into deep sleep.

Noticing whatever happened to disturb her. She was left quite alone. She awoke at dawn. The wild March winds were holding high revel in the skies; the rain fell in showers; the room was no longer heated with the hot air pipes. Aileen saw the chima ornaments and the quaint cabinets gradually grow out of the greyish gloom into the shapes she remembered yesterday. She started up shivering, alarmed and hungry.

"You want something to eat," said Dame Nature in her ear. "You would be, indeed, a poor spirited wretch if you accepted a morsel of food in this house," whispered Madame Pride in her other ear.

"But I have not the choice," said the poor child, aloud. "for these wretches will not give me one crumb. He said I should have nothing until about two o'clock to-day; that time is

hours distant. It must be horrible to die of want. I have seen the poor among our own people in Ireland half starving, but they were not prisoners; they could go to a neighbour's house and ask for a draught of buttermilk. Ah, if I had one now."

And then began long hours of watchfulness and waiting. As the time wore on Aileen began to grow ravenous. She actually opened the cabinets in the hope of finding a withered apple or a few crumbs of stale biscuit, but all in vain. There were some gaudily bound books on one cabinet, but Aileen was not in the mood to find solace from their pages, and so the hours went round.

There was not a gleam of sunshine the whole day long. The rain fell in torrents and dashed furiously against the windows. Aileen watched the fir trees and shrubs on the lawn tossing wildly, frantically in the wind. They were a type of her own agonised feelings.

Truly, that astute noble, Lord Athlone, had hit upon a diabolically cunning method of making the girl long for his presence. She was starving, cold, weary, and she had not the faintest hope of anything until he appeared again. There was not the sound of a voice or a footstep or the shutting of a door in the villa.

"I shall go mad," said Aileen, desperately.

At that moment the panel slid aside and Lord Athlone stood before her, calm, handsome, elegant, perfumed. He held a half smoked cigarette in his jewelled fingers; his manner expressed a supreme nonchalance and gracefulness.

"Good-morning," said Lord Athlone, carelessly.

Aileen flushed crimson. She turned her eyes, swollen with weeping, upon the grandee. She did not answer him; she drew herself up and looked at him with defiant scorn.

"Are you so sulky?" asked Lord Athlone, sinking carelessly upon a couch.

Still Aileen would not speak, and Lord Athlone took out a splendid gold hunting watch, on which his monogram was worked in flashing diamonds. He opened this watch and said, looking at it with a languid smile:

"I will give you exactly twenty minutes, Miss Shadrack. If within that time you do not condescend to speak to me and tell me what you wish for, I shall go away and you will not have another chance of food until this time tomorrow."

"Shall I speak or not?" Aileen asked herself. "If I do not have food until this time tomorrow I may be dead, and it is so cruel a death."

She strove to speak, but her throat felt dry and parched. At last, with an effort, she said:

"May I have some bread and milk, Lord Athlone?"

"Ho, ho!" he answered; "then your pride has fallen an inch or so, Miss Shadrack. May you have some milk? I really don't know; I rather think you will have to be more humble before I give anything here but shelter. I have thought much over what you said to me yesterday, and I consider you the most insolent jade in creation. You require a very great deal of taking—"

"Do you want to have my murder on your conscience, Lord Athlone?"

"Upon my word it would not trouble me. I should not care a snap. I am an autocrat in my own person; I always approve of putting down rebellion with the strong hand. If I had my way, and if the Government would make me Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with unlimited powers, I would have all the fellows who can't or won't pay their rents bound hand and foot and shot in rows of a dozen every morning. The prettiest girls I would spare, but the older women and their wretched brats should all be tied up in sacks and drowned; and as for my conscience being troubled, I assure you, pretty Shadrack, I have not one. I believe in nothing, and I fear nothing. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then you are a fiend in human shape!" said Aileen.

"If you like, yes. I don't believe myself in any other fiends than those in human shape."

continued Lord Athlone, with a sneer. "I believe in paying people well if you want them to do your bidding, and I pay my servants in this house to keep food out of your way until you have come to your senses."

"If I die, Lord Athlone," said Aileen, with a faint smile, "your servants will hold an awful secret of yours; they will have you in their power. How will you like that?"

A sudden pallor overspread the wicked aristocratic face, and a deadly gleam shone in the light-coloured eyes.

"When you are dead, Miss Shadrack," he said, "you won't be much inquired after, depend upon that. I value you for your pretty face, and if you had consented to take the place of Crystalline you might have made your fortune, driven in the parks, and had half the town at your feet. You should have driven the finest pair of cream-coloured horses in London, but since you prefer being shut up here without food or fire, take your choice; you are determined and so am I."

"Lord Athlone," said Aileen, "don't refuse me a little bread and water."

"Well, I will send you half a round of bread and a teacup filled with milk and water, but you won't get another morsel until this time tomorrow, half-past two, when I will come here again, and if you are more amiable and inclined to take the place of Crystalline, I may give you a glass of wine and a chop."

Alas! the demon of hunger is all powerful. Aileen's beautiful eyes gleamed as only the eyes of the starving can gleam when Lord Athlone mentioned the wine and the chop with a cold smile. The wretch noted his advantage. He looked down on the polished floor and smiled.

"A delicious brown soup, with mutton potatoes and a glass of rare rich old port for you this time to-morrow," he said, smiling, "if you are wiser and more inclined to listen to reason, as it strikes me you will be. Indeed, Miss Shadrack, there is a visible improvement since yesterday, when your insolence passed the bounds of sanity. You are not quite so insulting to-day. What about my becoming King of England and asking you to marry me and you refusing, eh?"

As he spoke he wheeled round and fixed his evil eyes on Aileen's face. She shrank from their cruel glare as she would have shrank from a beast of prey, and Lord Athlone laughed a cruel laugh.

"Good-afternoon," he said, coldly. "I feel quite convinced that by this time to-morrow you will be in a far more amiable frame of mind than at present."

Then he passed through the sliding panel in the wall, and Aileen was left once more alone. However, in about ten minutes' time she heard the key grate in the door at the other end of the room, and there entered the little green page.

Somebody outside in the corridor locked the door upon him, and he advanced. He carried a tray on which was a small teacup filled with sky blue milk and water, and a plate on which lay a little thin piece of stale bread. Aileen looked up in the boy's pert young face.

"Won't you help me to escape?" she said. "You are young. Have you a sister?"

"Yes, I have two; they both drive their ponies in the park; one's an actress. I am astonished at you, Miss Moore. Why, my lord is mad for you, but if you hold out he'll—"

At this moment the door at the end of the room was violently opened and a deep, commanding voice cried:

"Come here, Christopher; you must not gossip there!"

Christopher then beat a hasty retreat, and Aileen was left with her scanty repast. She ravenously devoured it, and then she felt more hungry than before.

"What shall I do; I am afraid I shall become mad," said Aileen.

And she burst into helpless, desolate weeping.

Emily Lady Athlone was more envied than any other woman in London. She had literally

the world at her feet. Gorgeous state, great wealth, youth, talent, superb beauty, were hers. Besides all these, her husband was heir to an earldom, and one of the handsomest and most dashing officers in the Guards.

Numbers of belles had sighed for him in vain during two whole seasons. When this elegant nobleman chose he could make himself the idol of the fair sex. He was horribly fickle. Everybody said that of him, but that only made ladies admire him the more.

Previous to her marriage Lady Emily Fairleigh had not been credited with possessing an ounce of sentiment or morsel of what is called "romance" in her whole organisation. She herself had given it out that she was marrying Lord Athlone for his heirship to the earldom, and that he was marrying her for her uncle's wealth.

"We don't care a straw for each other," the madcap lady used to say, with a laugh, "and we shall be, I am sure, twenty times happier than if we were sentimental noddles, for we shall never be jealous."

Thus Lady Emily had spoken; thus she had believed, but alas for the poor young bride she had most unfortunately discovered all at once that she possessed heart warm, tender, clinging, passionate. She had never really loved Edward Athlone; her more volatile nature had never comprehended the depth and earnestness of his; but alas for her peace, alas for the whole of her future, Lady Athlone adored with a jealous adoration her worthless, heartless, soulless husband.

She soon found that he did not care one straw for her; indeed, she discovered quite by accident, that beautiful as she was he did not even consider her pretty, for one day she found in his drawer a letter from one of his friends, a young officer on duty in India. It ran in one part as follows:

"So you are to marry the Fairleigh, the society beauty, about whom all the world raves except yourself; and you say that in your opinion no straw-coloured woman is ever good-looking. People of taste, poets and painters, call the Fairleigh's tresses glorious golden; you call them straw-coloured. Tie upon you, Dick; but if the lady's tresses are of straw her fortune is not, and so, my boy, I congratulate you."

A charming letter this for a young bride to find a month after her marriage day. Lady Athlone felt as if she had received her death blow. Strange as it may seem, the beautiful creature had not a friend whom she could consult or confide in save Miss Thompson, her maid, who had already told her that she considered Aileen Moore a bold jade, who tried hard to attract the attention of Lord Athlone. It was the night before Aileen was decoyed away from Belgrave-Square that Lady Athlone returned from a grand ball, where she had been the acknowledged belle and beauty.

Royalty had signalled out the lovely bride to do her honour. She had danced with two princes of the blood. Half-a-dozen young male hearts had given themselves to her. She had floated round the room in her white, gauzy skirts, looped up with lilies; orient pearls were in her golden hair, and on her snowy neck and arms gleamed blue turquoises set round with blazing priceless diamonds. The mingled ascent and the fire of these glorious jewels set off her blonde, exquisite loveliness to perfection. More than one artist in the crowd made a sketch of the exquisite face and the perfect form. The next morning the society papers would write leaders in the praise of her respondent beauty. Lady Athlone knew all of this—knew how she was envied, admired, adored, and yet when she entered her luxurious chamber in the Belgrave Square mansion she sank down on a silken couch before the brilliant fire and clasped her jewelled hands and spoke fierce words of anguish through her closely shut teeth, and she tore the rich ornaments from her white throat and arms and flung them scornfully upon the ground.

"I hate them," she said—"those jewels born me. I wish I was an Irish peasant girl with

cows to milk and chickens to feed, and baskets of eggs and butter to carry to market on my arm. I wish I wore thick clumsy stockings, or no shoes at all. I am the most miserable wretch under the sun."

Lady Athlone spoke these wild words aloud. Thompson, the tall, dark maid with the masculine face and figure, came stealthily, silently, from a recess in the splendid room, knelt down and picked up the jewels, carried them to the exquisite inlaid toilette table, and locked them safely in the ivory jewel case.

Then she returned towards her mistress, who still sat in a state of silent, sullen gloom before the fire, her eyes fixed on vacancy. Lady Athlone took no notice whatever of her maid.

"Shall I disrobe your ladyship?" asked Thompson.

"I don't care; you can leave me here all the night if you like; it does not matter to me where I am or what I do to-night."

"Ah, my lady, I am very glad you put a limit upon this season of despair," replied Thompson, with a smile. "It is only to-night that you and the world, whose idol you are, are at variance. Only take a cup of chocolate and try to sleep, and in the morning you will wake up in the brightest, happiest spirits."

"Chocolate?" repeated the society beauty, contemptuously. "I require a something that shall steep my senses in oblivion for at least some hours. With this pain at my heart how am I to sleep?"

"Is your ladyship ill? Then let Sir James Charlton be sent for."

"Stop!" cried Lady Athlone; "no physician can cure me. I suffer—ah! you know it, Thompson, because all the glitter and pomp and flattery in the world are worthless to me, because my husband holds me in contempt."

"I would hold him in the same," Thompson began.

Lady Athlone stopped her. "You know nothing of me. I did not know myself until I became his wife. Before that, just a week or two before, I began to suspect that Richard Athlone was dearer to me than anything else on earth; but I tried to stifle the feeling. I said to myself, 'In society the wife who is in love with her own husband is laughed at behind her back'; but for all that my love for this worthless, heartless man grew day by day until it became a monster, a tyrant. And meanwhile he spurns me, mocks me, and spends his time elsewhere. He was not even at the ball to-night, the most brilliant of the season. He will return in an hour, go to his own room, and breakfast there alone. We shall not meet until dinner; we never do. And there will be strangers present. After that the opera or a ball. He will leave me to my devices. I wish I was dead."

Thompson put her hand before her mouth and coughed. Then she said:

"Your ladyship may have a rival."

Lady Athlone ground her white teeth. "If I thought that," cried the impassioned young bride, "I would kill her."

"Less violent measures might be found by means of which she might be put out of my lord's reach. Your rival is the Irish peasant girl whom you took from the roadside when she was with the ruffians who stole the jewels, and who it is believed killed another man. That Aileen Moore is, or I am much mistaken, secretly coqueting with my lord. I doubt not the jade hopes that he will give her an establishment as extravagant as that he gave Crystaleta."

Lady Athlone spoke a few angry words to her maid.

"Thompson, how do you know all this?" she said. "I know that you hate her, and once or twice I have caught my husband staring at her, but she is a virtuous girl, though somehow I don't like her as I did."

Thompson burst into a bitter laugh.

"We will watch her, my lady," she said, "and I am very much mistaken if we shall not discover something that will astonish you very much."

"Tell me plainly what you know," cried Lady Athlone. "Tell me the worst."

Now, the fact was there was no "worst" to say. Miss Thompson knew nothing more against Aileen than those vague rumours which had reached her at Athlone Castle, and which she had already faithfully retailed to Lady Athlone with the effect of making that young personage look indeed with coquetry on Aileen, but never seriously suspect her, and Miss Thompson on this occasion had nothing more to tell her lady than what she had already told her.

She was an envious, spiteful, evil-tempered, and hard-hearted person, but she was incapable of a deliberate lie. She was worldly-wise enough to be aware that such did not pay, and she was obliged to confess now to the unhappy Lady Athlone that she was only guided by her instincts, and as yet had no absolute facts upon which to ground her assertion.

"But I am as certain that he thinks of that creature, ay, and that she thinks of him, as that you, my dear lady, sit there with that pale, unhappy face. You will lose your beauty, Lady Emily, if you allow grief to prey so deeply on you."

"My beauty," replied Lady Athlone, with a bitter smile, "has failed to charm the only man I ever loved or can ever love, my husband. Thompson, watch, be ever on the alert. Watch Lord Athlone day and night. If you find out who my rival is you shall have a thousand pounds."

Thompson's black eyes gleamed. "I will soon find out, my lady," she answered. "And now let me persuade you to take some chocolate, into which I will put a few drops of cognac, and then you will sleep."

Lady Athlone, sighing heavily, yielded to the entreaties of her maid. She suffered herself to be disrobed, drank the chocolate, and laid down and slept soundly. The next day she met her lord at breakfast, and asked him why he had not come to the ball.

"I hate balls," answered Lord Athlone, wearily.

He did not even look at his lovely bride of two months, who, attired in the freshest, daintiest, and costliest of morning costumes, sat before the silver and Dresden tea equipage in an elegant room, where everything spoke of refinement and luxury. How happy this highly born, wealthy, handsome young couple ought to have been according to all the canons of worldly wisdom and expediency, and all the teachings of fashion and pride and what is called society.

My lord leaned back in his chair. He was reading a sporting paper, which he held in one hand, while with the other he stirred his coffee. His feet, encased in velvet slippers, were stretched out. Nothing could have expressed indifference towards his lovely companion more than this careless attitude of her lord.

"Richard," said Lady Athlone, "I believe you hate me."

He only smiled languidly. "I wish you would not talk," he said. "I am reading such a capital joke."

"I hate capital jokes," said the young wife, petulantly, "and I think you rude and unkind to me, Lord Athlone."

Her voice trembled, but the young lord only raised his brows.

"I do believe you hate me," said Lady Athlone, again.

"Don't talk nonsense, my dear," said her husband.

"My dear!" Ah, Richard, how seldom is that that you speak to me even as kindly as that, and I have been idiot enough to give you any poor heart."

"Take it back—take it back, my dear," responded Lord Athlone, and he let the paper drop and swallowed his coffee. "I don't want hearts sweet Emily. I have not one to offer you. I am a heartless individual. Go your own way, my pretty wife, and let me go mine. Let us have no more talk of hearts, Emily. All that nonsense is for those schoolboys and schoolgirls who send valentines to each other."

He stooped and kissed his wife on her white brow, then passed out of the room whistling a gay operatic air. Lady Athlone was very glad.

Miss Ibbotson rose to greet the new comers eagerly. Mr. Arundell was no great favourite with Gervase Fordham, but this feeling of silent antagonism was scarcely evident. Mr. Fordham stood on the now antiquated white bearskin, which did duty as a hearthrug in Miss Froue's drawing-room, spreading himself out to look as much like the master of the house as possible, his gold chain and locketa sparkling aggressively against his broad white waistcoat, his large, black whiskers ostentatiously defiant.

Miss Froue liked his self-assertive, arrogant way. She imagined it showed her future spouse to be a manly, thoroughly-toothed-his-teeth-in-battle-against-the-whole-world kind of personage, one to whom others might look up as a superior, and on whom she could herself rely for advice and protection on all occasions.

Mr. Fordham disliked Mr. Arundell on the Doctor Foul principle, however; when the latter does not find it convenient to stand face to face with his own self and ask disagreeable questions.

Miss Froue allowed Gervase to drift into an idle talk with Percy Darvill—another gentleman on his Doctor Foul list—while she eagerly drew Mr. Arundell into one of the deep embayed windows. She could hardly let him tell her of his success in the interests of Beattie, so anxious was she to information of the young girl's altered prospects.

Mr. Arundell remained in comment—not altogether unmixed with a faint dash of a feeling scarcely to be defined—not disappointment or a sensation of chill, but something more stationary, distant from joyful sympathy, and partaking of the nature of those sentiments.

"Dear Mr. Arundell," Miss Froue went on, laying her thin white hand on his sleeve unconsciously to arrest his best attention, "dear friend, may I beg one more favour, one more kindness in addition to all you have so freely given me?"

"Speak, dear Miss Froue. If I can do anything for you or for either of our two charming and amiable girls, it will give me the greatest possible pleasure," replied Mr. Arundell, his eyes half downcast, his voice soft and kindly.

"My fears and doubts are over for Beattie," Miss Ibbotson proceeded. "But before, poor child, she has, I plainly foresee, a time of much trouble before her. She is so gentle, so docile, that she will not be able to battle for herself. She will fall into the hands of her mother."

"Her mother!" echoed Mr. Arundell, unfeigned surprise, even amazement, in every feature. "I thought her mother was—was dead."

"So everybody thought," said Miss Ibbotson with some acrimony. "But it seems she is still alive, for I had a letter from her this morning. To-morrow she will come to take away our little Faye."

"You use—pray pardon me—you use strange language. Just now you said she will fall into the hands of her mother. Who so natural a caretaker for a girl as a mother? Has the woman disgraced herself?"

"I will tell you—Hush! here comes Faye," and Miss Ibbotson made a sign of caution. "By-and-bye," she hastily added, in the same undertone as that in which she had already spoken.

Cold and cruel, indeed, must have been the heart which could have desired or foretold a painful destiny for so fair, so bright a creature as the girl who stood half hesitatingly on the little white furry mat just within the doorway.

She looked like the impersonation of all that was pleasant and sunshiny without, seeming to bring with her the fresh fragrance of the garden from whence she came. In the simplest of morning dresses, her long, fair hair falling in rippled waves over her shoulders and down her back after the manner of a modern nymph, deep violet eyes, glancing with shy welcome on the three visitors, her smiling red lips parted sufficiently to permit a gleam of pearly teeth; her face, her attitude, her every gesture full of that innocent, truthful grace and expression which

generally departs with the last days of childhood. Fayette was at that moment a perfectly charming image. Painter or sculptor might have rejoiced to take her as the model of a pure and beautiful guardian angel. Mr. Gervase Fordham favoured her with his usual patronising smile. He was rather fond of smiling, as he happened to be endowed with notoriously fine white teeth, and did not dislike to draw attention to that circumstance.

Mr. Arundell went to meet her, both his hands outstretched, taking masculine advantage of his age and privileged friendship since her earliest days to kiss her on the forehead, while he made inquiries as to her welfare, a certain additional tenderness of mannerising induced by the stamping himself down of all desire to escape.

Percy Darvill was the last to address Fayette. He looked, as did the others, beyond the graceful, easy-figure, as if surprised that the stately presence of Beattie was nowhere visible.

Mr. Darvill was a remarkably fine young fellow of some five or six and twenty years of age. Tall and fair, with particularly broad shoulders, and a strong, self-assertive air about his pleasant face. His face, naturally delicate in complexion as that of a girl, was somewhat as that of a young man. His honest, dark blue eyes were keen and penetrating, yet full of a sparkling light easily transfused to others.

He was altogether an unusually handsome example of a middle-class Englishman, decidedly modelled after the young Greek god type: a perfectly symmetrical figure, and features regularly cut as those of an antique statue. He had not asked for Beattie, trusting that, as had always happened, both girls would appear together. But when Fayette came in alone he looked visibly disconcerted. His colour faltered slightly as he spoke to her.

"How do you do, Miss Lassell? I hope you are quite well? You look charming. If—I hope—your cousin Miss Beattie is quite well?"

"Oh yes. I thought she was coming in. She will be here presently. I believe she was upstairs to see if her carriage would light for the day. You know how careful she is of her birds," said Fayette, looking at him with her serene, sunny smile.

Percy Darvill felt vexed with himself for not having had the patience to wait. But nearly three months had passed since he had seen Beattie; he was desperately in love, and patience was not his distinguishing characteristic. He fancied he looked stupid, so did not make any remark. Fayette went on, unconscious that she was going to electrify her hearer.

"We are going away to-morrow."

"Going away!" echoed Percy—then stopped, and looked at Fayette in blank astonishment.

"Yes. You are surprised? We are surprised."

"Who are we? I knew your aunt was going to be married, and I knew—I mean I thought—Mr. Arundell told me there would be serious changes here; but I didn't think you were all going so soon. But—may I ask who you mean by we?"

"Beattie—and me."

"Indeed. But isn't it rather—rather sudden, Miss Faye?"

"Very sudden. So sudden that I can't realise it yet."

"But—but I don't understand."

"I hardly understand myself. I think hardly any of us understand yet," said Fayette, a little sadly. "A letter came about me from my mother, whom we all thought—you know, Mr. Darvill, they believed my mother died when I was a mite of a child," she explained, in a subdued, semi-confidential tone.

"You amaze me, Miss Fayette. You know you have all been so kind, you have always treated me just like one of the family—so you must not be displeased if I claim to be allowed to take an interest. But—this seems—"

"My mother wrote to say she would come for me to-morrow. If you like, you may read her letter."

"If I like? I should indeed."

Percy took the cold, brief letter containing the programme of arrangements laid down by Mrs. Lassell, and read it very carefully.

"By Jove! I never was more—more—I don't know what to say. But Beattie—Miss Allen—this doesn't concern her!"

"No. Her father—"

"Fay!"

"Yes. Nothing will ever soon surprise again, Mr. Percy. Beattie's father has written to say he is now very rich; he is now Sir—oh, I forget—Sir Something Albany, and Ann Froue says Beattie is a most fortunate girl."

"Oh, Fayette—Miss Lassell—" Fay Darvill's voice and face were full of real consternation. "And Miss Froue will let you both go? he went on.

"She cannot help it, I suppose. But" Fayette interrupted herself, gaily, "we are all gone yet. And we must go some time or other."

"But—but it can't be real. Where are you going?"

"I don't know."

"And Beattie—"

"I don't know that either."

"I am so surprised," concluded Percy, as when Miss Froue was soundly caught here. "Fay, let her—will you listen to me for a moment? I have something of the first importance, to tell you about."

The door was slightly ajar, and the faint fragrance of trifled odours was distinctly heard from star to star, emanating. Miss Froue/missell had sharply and soundly caught here.

"If that child hasn't gone and gotten her Sunday best and patient," she indignantly thought.

Beattie disappeared, unnoticed. Fayette had been some minutes before. She made a lovely picture against the dark, heavy, panelled walls, with sprays of the illus in the wide, old-fashioned hall without a single kind of "paraffin-like" adjunct. With incomparable beauty, she had chosen for print morning gown of her fine muslin pink and white, with a pink under-skirt, and looked undisturbedly upon the bather in the atmosphere. Dressed and adorned, reflected very little difference in Fayette, who was always herself, but with Beattie they were all-important. Queen red royal robes.

Her tall, slender, perfectly straight figure was stately and dignified as that of an ideal queen. Unlike Fayette, whose complexion was like that of a delicate blushing rose, she was almost marsh white, with features exquisitely carved as those of a cameo. Her dark, abundant hair was bound round her classic head with a statuette.

No princess trained in courts ever floated in a salon with a more self-possessed, half insolent grace than Beattie advanced with, armed at all points like a confident Diana. She nearly shut her black eyes, with the artfulness of a cat, and glanced at Percy Darvill for a second, then pretending to ignore his existence, opened her eyes very wide, and beamed with sublime indifference on Mr. Arundell, who had not seen that momentary shaft of light glitter past him.

"My dear," said the old gentleman, taking her hand between both his, but not attempting to venture to kiss her, "I find I have to congratulate you on a very unexpected accession to wealth and station. I came down with the offer of a rather agreeable position as 'companion for you, but happily that is no longer of value to you."

Beattie's eyes shot another rapid glance at Percy Darvill. The poor fellow was impudently waiting for the chance to speak to her, and was totally unaware that Fayette had left him, as she was at the opposite side of the room. But Miss Allen replied to the friendly observation with Mr. Arundell with a frank, unrruffled smile.

"It seems so strange, dear Mr. Arundell. I am one of the old fairy tales—quite. I suppose Aunt Froue has told you all about it?"

"Only mentioned the crude facts, my dear child. I am anxiously waiting for the rough outline to be finished with details. Come down here and tell me the story."

Beattie looked down, and hesitated. Patience was not Miss Allenby's distinguishing characteristic any more than Mr. Darvill's, and it was appalling at that moment to contemplate allowing herself to be monopolised for half an hour or more by even so kind a friend as the old gentleman who was smiling upon her.

"I know nothing about it," she said, "I never knew anything about my father, beyond the fact that he went abroad while I was a little girl—'as high,' as the children say. He has just come home, is rich—so he wants me—so is quite silent, you know, dear Mr. Arundell. I will show you his letter presently."

"No time like the present, my dear." "Dear me—I have left it upstairs," said Beattie, almost trembling with vexation.

"Very well, very well. We must have a talk about it by-and-by."

Beattie had already responded to the same question offered by Percy Darvill, in her own way. She now drifted a few steps towards him, resting on a natural ground, near one of the shadows opening on the garden. Nobody was giving any attention, so Percy Darvill caught Miss Beattie's hand, and looked earnestly, searching, at her. Miss Beattie glanced this way and that, like a half-frightened bird, then she eyes met his with a sort of laughing welcome. Voices do not need, they do not like, formal greetings and inquiries.

"You are going away?" abruptly said Percy Darvill. "Where are you going?"

"I cannot tell you," said Beattie, smiling. "I say tell me your father has become a rich old man."

"I believe it is so. He wants me now. We had a letter from him this morning."

Beattie hesitated, without making the slightest remark.

"You know," the young girl continued, "in any case, when Aunt Prue married—and she will be married in a few weeks—we must, Faye and I, leave her, so it will not make much difference."

"How do you mean, it won't make much difference?" asked Percy, as if rousing from a painful reverie. "It seems to me it must make as much difference as between light and darkness."

Beattie looked at him with surprise. He spoke in apparent anger, which somewhat justified her.

"Well, of course it makes a difference one way," she admitted.

"You will go, you will forget all your old friends—those who knew and loved you," said Percy, with sudden bitterness.

"Why should you say so?" demanded Beattie, dark eyes flashing at the reproach. They were now, having wandered from the room into the quaint old-fashioned garden while speaking.

"Why should you judge me so harshly, so unmercifully?"

He caught her hands, and pressed them against his breast with vehemence.

"Beattie," he said, eagerly, passionately, "tell me one thing; do you think you will forget that you have left one faithful heart to find you, in going to your new and splendid home?"

"You speak as if I should never see any of my friends again," she exclaimed, in alarm.

"Why do you frighten me so? Do you think my new-found father will prove a tyrant, to forbid me to look back on those that I have lived with—those I have known, when he asks you to talk such nonsense? It is very like you."

The little talk she had looked for with Percy turned out very differently to what poor Beattie had anticipated. She had flown to her room, adorned herself, and came down glowing, heart beating with delight to think she had wonderful news to tell; and now they were only quarrelling. Little did she dream that it was only the thought that her unexpected return had so far removed her from him that it had obliged to stifle the words of love, the offer of marriage which he had meant to make her feet, for his position, his income, were undefined at the present moment. Tears filled her brilliant eyes.

"I have not seen him for three months," she thought, "and he is like this?"

Percy caught sight of the tears as she averted her face, and forgot his prudent resolve.

"Beattie," he whispered, "I love you, and I must lose you. One word, one look—"

"Beattie!" cried Miss Prue, at that moment approaching the glass doors, and speaking rather crossly; "come here, child. Why have you not shown Mr. Arundell your father's letter?"

Other people's little flirtations or love episodes were nothing to Miss Prue. In the present instance she was absolutely indifferent, if not blind, but as a general rule she dearly liked to throw a few buckets of cold water to help in making the course of true love slightly swampy, or a few handfuls of macadam to roughen the way a little.

It was a particularly awkward moment to have chosen for a declaration of love, and Percy half regretted his precipitation. Beattie hesitated for a moment or two, then, as Aunt Prue did not see exactly where she was, owing to the thickness of the intervening shrubs, made a step forward to escape. Percy laid a detaining hand on her arm to stop her flight.

"Only one word," Beattie, he whispered in her ear. "You love me, do you not?"

With the perversity of a young girl who has obtained what she has anxiously longed for, she would not vouchsafe either word or glance, but fled away, her soul lifted into an ecstacy of joy and tremulous delight. Aunt Prue took a few steps into the garden to reconnoitre and abruptly came upon Percy, who was fixed in most interested apiaristic observation at a respectful distance from the two great bee-hives.

"Mr. Darvill," she said, sharply, "pray what has become of Beattie? She was with you here, was she not?"

"She was here just now, Miss Ibbotson," tranquilly responded Mr. Darvill; "but she went away."

"Went away! Oh, indeed. The girl's head is fairly turned. That, however, is not much to be wondered at. Do you know, Mr. Darvill, she is Sir Hubert Allenby's only daughter, and must one day be his heiress, and he is now worth about twenty-two thousand a year? She does not know anything about her riches, for I had not time to explain it to her; but still, she knows enough to make her half crazy."

The stalwart, firm-willed Percy sat looking helplessly bewildered as any abashed school-girl. Had a mine exploded at his feet he could hardly have felt more absolutely confounded. This morning he had left home with the fixed determination of asking Beattie to engage herself to him.

He had not taken Mr. Allenby into his confidence, for which want of frankness he had twenty excellent reasons. That Beattie would make no objection he was quite sure. In their childhood they had been playmates, in early youth the best of friends, and it had only been of late years that any constraint had arisen to fetter the pleasant freedom of their friendship.

"She leaves you to-morrow, I understand?" he stammered, confusedly.

"To-morrow!" contemptuously echoed Miss Prue. "If the girls go in a week I shall be very much surprised."

This was a respite. Miss Ibbotson returned to her other guests, discontented and vexed. Percy Darvill sat still and stared at the bees. All his bright hopes and dreams were dashed to the ground. He was tongue-tied now until the way was a little clearer. Beattie was happy as any bird skimming in early sunlight. No doubt, no fear, oppressed her heart.

"My life," she whispered to herself, "is turning out like a beautiful fairy tale, or a delightful dream. I wish I could have Fayette quietly to myself, that we might talk about this wonderful change. Poor Fay! I wish we were going together."

But there was no chance that day of a quiet sisterly talk, though it might be the last opportunity they should ever have. Mr. Allenby proposed that the little party of six should have a waggonette and go for a good long drive. He

suggested to Miss Ibbotson that it was a special occasion, that they had a magnificent day, and that it would be a pleasant respite. The modest expenses he insisted should fall on himself.

After some consideration this proposition was agreed to. The housemaid, Phoebe, was directed to go down to the "Three Jolly Houghboys" inn and order the waggonette, with a basket of provisions for luncheon. As Aunt Prue went upstairs with the girls to dress she explained that she had no intention of letting their relatives carry them off in so summary a fashion as they threatened.

"You will go when I please," she said, irritably, "and not an hour sooner."

The drive proved a real treat. Some of the loveliest scenery lay around for miles. Within easy reach was a venerable pile of ruins, the ivy-covered walls of a mediæval priory. Here the party alighted and enjoyed the refreshments they had brought in the waggonette.

They wandered about for an hour on the outskirts of a shady wood. Miss Prue and Gervase Fordham paired off together. The girls kept together, Mr. Allenby on one side, Percy Darvill on the other. There was no chance of altering this arrangement, although Beattie and her lover would have liked to have done so. The girls naturally talked almost without cessation of the totally unexpected turn life had taken since the morning.

By the time the party again drove up to The Sycamores it was six o'clock, and Patsey Brown, having recovered her good humour, and having been given carte blanche, had the nicest little dinner imaginable ready.

CHAPTER IV.

BACK FROM THE DIM PAST.

We both have backward trod the paths of fate,
To meet again in life. —COPPERFIELD.

ABOUT an hour after dinner, just as the radiant sunlight began to fade into silvery neutral tints, with gleaming golden dashes of colour on the topmost boughs of the trees, Fayette wandered into the garden lying in front of the house. Aunt Prue was talking to Gervase Fordham. Of course, "spooning," as Gervase mentally termed the meandering dialogue.

Mr. Arundell had fallen asleep in the big arm-chair, an occasional snore betrayed that fact. Beattie was playing softly in the twilight at the far end of the long old-fashioned drawing-room, her white fingers straying through odd snatches of the Songs without Words, or Beethoven's sonatas. Percy sat by her, and these two young people seemed to forget that anybody existed in the world besides themselves.

Fayette had a headache—a very unusual visitation with her. The fragrant evening air, the serene sky, the mystical, dreamy shadows, the soft, sweet scents from the flowers, rising like a wordless, soundless litany, as the heat and oppression of the day drifted off—the quietude and calm allured her, and she knew she would not be missed if she stole away for a little while.

Her heart felt strange and foreboding; perhaps from the reaction consequent on the excitement of the eventful day. A great black retriever—Roy—which was invariably chained up during the daytime, but allowed to range about after sunset, bounded to meet her, having just been loosened by Phoebe. A splendid creature was Roy, with velvety paws, and deep, lustrous, almost human eyes.

A very sedate, well-educated quadruped, too; so, after indulging in a short series of gymnastic exercises for his own private enjoyment, and an evidence of affectionate feelings towards the one member of the household who was his special favourite, Roy slackened his rampant paces to suit the slow steps of Fayette.

The young girl looked like some fair spirit, walking dreamily to and fro in the subdued light in that half wild garden, the illusory effect being heightened by the soft, white dra-

peries defining as much as concealing her figure.

Having paced backwards and forwards many times, Fayette rammed down to one of the tall iron gates, and leaning her head against the cool bars gazed out upon the road—a wide dusty highway, straight and particularly uninteresting, with prosaic fields ranging on the opposite side. There was nothing to see.

There never was anything to see, excepting sometimes in the morning the butcher's cart or pony and the various conveyances of other tradespeople from the village. Precisely opposite to the gate lay a cross road or bridle path lined with blackberry hedges which marked the limits of fields and meadows branching off on either side.

This path led in a direct line to Crane Wood. The trees forming the wood stood out in relief against the opalescent sky in rich masses of varied green, from the pale tints of the silvery larch to the sombre hues of the grand old oak.

To Fayette's child-like mind the world, that busy, bustling arena which, in common with all young girls, she earnestly longed to enter, had always seemed to be beyond those heaped up billows of green and brown. She had asked what place was behind that mysterious curtain of foliage, always hearing with vexation the invariable answer—"Chipstone-on-Marsham." And beyond it she had inquired; only to receive another dry, unattractive, topographical direction.

Fayette had no lover, although she was so winning, so amiable, and so beautiful. There was nobody at Cricklemore-cum-Starkles for whom she could reasonably be expected to care. It was a region unusually destitute of young men, eligible or ineligible. The widowed, childless owner of the Hall had lived for years abroad—besides being past fifty, so he could not fairly be counted.

The rector's only son, who was some five or six years older than Percy Darvill, had entered the Church and departed for a distant city, with "views" rabidly "high," the celibacy of the clergy being among his most cherished points of doctrine. Neither were there any pretty or interesting girls about. So there was little to regret in leaving Cricklemore-cum-Starkles.

Yet, in this tranquil, soothing light, the familiar scents from the garden about her, the evening song of the birds, to which she had listened from earliest childhood—the foreboding, the vague reluctance to sudden change which the calm restful evening brings so often, fell upon her timid heart.

As her gaze wandered over the quiet scene without Fayette became suddenly conscious of the approach of a solitary figure—that of a female, who was walking slowly along the narrow footpath.

It was the figure of a stranger, for Fayette knew everyone living in or near Cricklemore-cum-Starkles, if not as an acquaintance, at least, by sight and name. Fayette was much surprised by this apparition. With curious eyes she idly watched its progress, until the dark-robed figure was sufficiently within view to enable her to distinguish details of appearance.

A tall, slender woman, a lady, one would say—dressed in dark grey habiliments not unfashionably made, though without pretension. A woman with blonde hair, and a face still retaining traces of great beauty, though long, and decidedly thin and worn.

It was an odd time for a strange lady to be rambling alone across those deserted fields, and Fayette unconsciously watched as the figure slowly walked up the path. Then she lost sight of it, for the person, whoever she might be, struck across by a still narrower path on the other side of the hedge, and vanished.

Fayette, followed by Roy, turned to go again into the house, when a faint yet sharp and clear cry arrested her attention. She paused, but the cry was not repeated.

"I must have been mistaken," she said, aloud.

But she still lingered, anticipating that, perhaps, a second cry might break on the soft sum-

mer stillness of the air. A quick patter-patter step from the left made her move quickly again to her post of observation at the gate, preceded by Roy, who began barking furiously. A girl of about fourteen was half running in the direction taken by the stranger, but stopped on seeing Fayette's white figure.

"Look, look, miss!" she exclaimed, pointing with a chubby brown finger. "That lady's just tumbled trying to get over the stile. I think she's killed herself, for she's a lying down quite still."

(To be Continued.)

A RACE FOR HONOUR.

(A DOUBLE PROPHECY FOR 1880.)

A was the All-right that started the crew,
B was Ben Beaky who steer'd the Dark Blue;
C the Conservatives all of a row,
D was the Doinga they found was no go;
E the Enlightenment swamping the boat,
F was the Feeling that had kept it afloat;
G was the Go in them almost exhausted,
H was the House looking cheerless and frosted;
I was the Indian affairs in a muddle,
J was the Jingo Conservatives cuddle;
K was the Kind cheers that hailed the Light Blue,
L was the Liberals composing its crew;
M was the Mire Tories placed in their way,
N was the News they were gaining the day;
O was the Order in which they were placed,
P was the Pleasure with which they were traced;
Q the Quietus they gave the Dark Blue,
R the Rejoicing that hailed the brave crew;
S was the Story the Tories had told,
T was the Trade of the country they'd sold;
U was the Union in the new ranks,
V was the Vain Tory State tricks and pranks;
W was the Welcom all gave with delight,
X was the Xmas which saw them all right;
Y was the Year bringing plenty we lack,
Z was the Zeal that had brought it us back.

O. P.

SCIENCE.

"HOW STEEL HARDENS."

THE above is the title page of a paper read before a recent meeting of the Engineers Association by its president, Mr. William Metcalf, who is also a prominent steel manufacturer. The gentleman has for years expended thought and time upon the topic, assisted in the chemical bearings of the subject by Professor Langley. The paper awakened a deep interest among the iron and steel men of Pittsburg, and is an exhaustive treatise. The conclusions arrived at by Mr. Metcalf and Mr. Langley are embodied in the concluding portion of the paper, in which the authors express the opinion that it has been clearly shown:

1st. That a good soft heat is safe to use, if steel be immediately and thoroughly worked. It is a fact that good steel will endure more pounding than any iron.

2nd. If steel be left long in the fire it will lose

its steely nature and grain, and assume the nature of cast iron. Steel should never be kept hot any longer than necessary for the work to be done.

3rd. Steel is entirely mercurial under the action of heat, and a careful study of the tables will show that there must, of necessity, be an injurious internal strain created whenever two or more parts of the same piece are subjected to different temperatures.

4th. It follows that when steel has been subjected to heat not absolutely uniform over the whole mass, careful annealing should be resorted to.

5th. As the change of volume, due to a varied degree of heat, increases directly and rapidly with the quantity of carbon present, therefore high steel is more liable to dangerous internal strains than low steel, and great care should be exercised in the use of high steel.

6th. Hot steel should always be put in a perfectly dry place of even temperature while cooling. A wet place in the floor might be sufficient to cause serious injury.

7th. Never let anyone mislead you with the statement that his steel possesses a peculiar property which enables it to be "restored" after being burned. No more should you waste any money on nostrums for "restoring" burned steel. We have shown how to restore "overheated" steel. For burned steel, which is oxidized steel, there is only one way of restoration, and that is, through the knibbling fire or the blast furnace. Overheating and restoring should only be allowable for the purpose of experiment. The process is one of disintegration, and is always injurious.

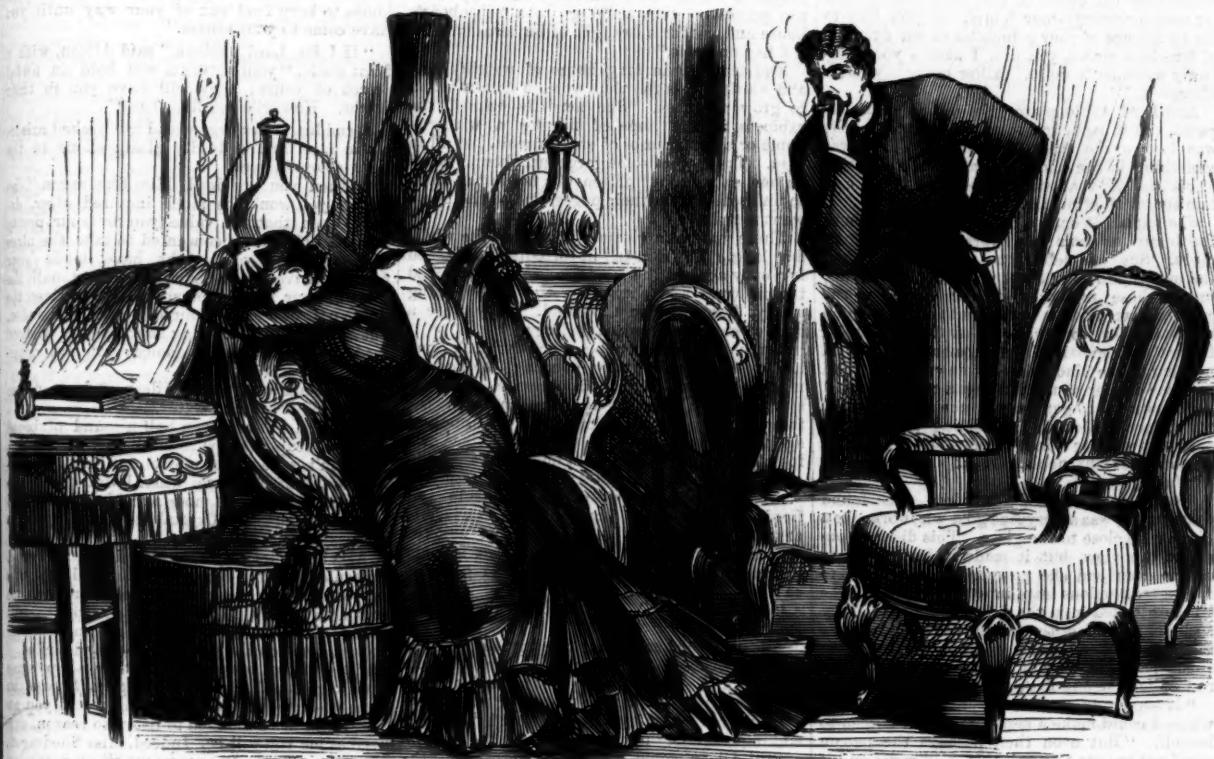
8th. Be careful not to overdo the annealing process; if carried too far, it does great harm, and it is one of the commonest modes of destruction which the steel maker meets in his daily troubles. It is hard to induce the average worker in steel to believe that very little annealing is necessary, and that a very little is really more efficacious than a great deal.

Finally, it is obvious that, as steel is governed by certain and invariable laws in all of the changes mentioned, which laws are not yet as clearly defined as they should be, nor as they will be; nevertheless, the fact that there are such laws, should give us confidence in the use of the material, because we may be sure of reaching reliable results by the proper observance of these laws. Therefore there is no good reason why engineers should be afraid to use steel if they manipulate it intelligently. Now, if we have wandered over a wide range in answer to the simple question, "Why does steel harden?" it was necessary to have looked at many facts before we could have an intelligent opinion of many theories; and if any are in doubt as to what is the correct answer to this momentous question, we only say that we are all "in the same boat," for if you do not know, neither do we.

HOW TO MAKE TIGHT TARRED PAPER ROOFS.

HAVE the lower layer of paper that comes next to the boards without tar or dressing of any kind (plain paper), then over that three layers of tarred paper. When the tarred paper is laid on the boards of the roof it adheres firmly to the boards, and when they come to shrink (they always do) the paper is torn at the joints between the boards, especially if wide lumber is used the fracture is greater. Plain paper does not adhere to the boards, and they are allowed to shrink or expand without damaging the roof. I have tried it and know that a roof put on in this way will remain tight twice as long as when the tarred paper is laid next to the boards, besides it entirely prevents the dripping of water through the cracks of the roof in hot weather. The extra expense is a mere trifle, not a shilling each square of 100 feet.—H.

THE Prince of Wales has been unanimously re-elected Grand Master of English Freemasons



[UNTAMED.]

AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love," &c., &c.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PRISONER.

Cruel and tiger like, graceful and sleek,
With eyes dashing fire, yet tones mild and meek,
In life's solemn farce he plays out his vile part,
This man without conscience, or pity, or heart.

"My dear Aileen, if that kind of proceeding amuses you, you are perfectly at liberty to divert yourself in that way. We can easily substitute calico curtains when you have destroyed those satin ones in your pretty pastime. The last fair occupant of this villa was a most charming coryphe named Crystalette. She had wonderfully extravagant tastes. I have known her to give a guinea apiece for peaches, and then fling them into the mud by the dozen to the street arabs as a reward to them for turning somersaults by the side of her carriage, and she wouldn't drink wine if she fancied it was less than a guinea a bottle; also she never would wear buttons to her dresses unless they were of eighteen carat gold, even for morning costume, while for evening dress she insisted on their being diamonds, rubies or sapphires. She was a most extravagant little witch, and her whims cost me six hundred pounds a month, yet she was starving in a garret in Oxford Market when I knew her first, and I swear I believe she had only one pair of stockings in the world, coryphe though she was. Now I rescued her from that condition, and she repaid me with the most piquant and graceful ingratitude. She was certainly a charming little creature,

but then she was not half as pretty as you are. You only want costuming, my flower of Erin, to make you as renowned a beauty in the demi-monde as was Lady Emily Fairleigh in the upper classes of society."

"Do not speak, my lord, of honourable women, be they beautiful ladies or good-looking country girls, in the same breath with unhappy creatures like Crystalette," cried Aileen.

"Unhappy creatures! Ah, poor child, you don't know what a merry madcap Crystalette was—and is; what a fortune she is saving up in spite of her extravagance."

"Hush, hush! I will not hear one word!" cried Aileen, "not one. Nothing shall make me listen to your fine talk. If you could give me the kingdom of England in exchange for my self-respect I would spurn the gift with my feet—yes, I would rather die; I would rather be cut in pieces than listen to your most wicked words!"

Lord Athlone's fair face grew very pale as Aileen spoke thus. There was an impassioned earnestness about the girl which showed him with his penetration and knowledge of the world that Aileen hated and scorned him, rich lordling though he was, and his inordinate vanity suffered terribly. What "love," as he called it, he entertained for Aileen touched already the borders of hate.

"If I don't conquer her, by George, I will kill her!" he said in his wicked heart. "She shan't ride roughshod over me in this fashion. I will humble her into the dust. She has nobody who cares particularly to look after her, I should imagine. The peasant lover was jealous of sweet brother Ted, and is gone to enliven the Yankees with his charming society. I would rather she were dead than alive and defying me as she is doing. You have a hot temper, my dear Aileen—a very hot temper," said Lord Athlone, as he sank languidly into a chair. "but I am not a bit afraid of hot tempers, not a bit. I have a hot temper myself." His sleepy blue eyes flashed. "But I have learned to keep it under control; a temper

like yours, Aileen, is apt to run away with one like a restive horse, and fling one against the kerbstone on one's head. Now you will have to remain in this house as long as I choose—as long as ever I choose," he repeated, in prim, emphatic tones. "Don't think that I am a man to be turned from my purpose. I have set my heart on winning you, and win you I will. I don't care how long I have to wait, but conquer you I will."

"I have gone through perils almost as bad before," said Aileen, "and my courage has never sunk. I am quite as determined as you are, my Lord Athlone. You may kill me if you like, but I will never stoop to shame!"

"Why hang it all!" cried Lord Athlone, "I believe if my straw-coloured beauty wife were dead, and how tired I am of her to be sure, I believe that if I were even a widower, and asked you to become Lady Athlone, that you are such a little demon that you would refuse. Speak! Would you?"

"My lord, you speak like an idiot or a madman!" was the certainly aggravating reply of Aileen.

"And you mean by that, of course," said Lord Athlone, "that if I were single you would marry me in order to become Lady Athlone?"

"No. I would not marry you if you became a widower and King of England, Lord Athlone; I hate you too much!"

Lord Athlone muttered a terrible oath.

"You are an insulting jade!" he said, with a smile, "but you are the prettiest woman in England, and I will conquer you. I don't intend to lodge you luxuriously or feed you with dainties; you shall have nothing whatever to eat till this time to-morrow, then we will see how you look, and we will hear what you say. Hunger, you know, is a grim fact at this moment existing in your own country. During the twenty-four hours that must elapse between now and this time to-morrow, you may amuse yourself by thinking that you are suffering in company with the poor souls in Donegal. You shan't have a crumb of bread nor a spoonful of

milk for twenty-four hours. Then I will see you again, and if you are still in the same mind we will try the effect of the same prescription for another twenty-four hours. If you like to die in defence of your principles as an example of ferocious virtue, you are, I assure you, perfectly welcome to do so. Allow me to say good-afternoon."

And Lord Athlone arose, bowed, went to the panel, slid it back, and then passing through he was lost to the sight of Aileen. There was something in the cold and deadly determination of his manner that struck the girl with a certain sensation of horror.

She felt all at once a deathly chill, although the luxurious room was warmed by hot air pipes. She was left alone now. If she liked she might pull down those costly satin curtains, break those treasures of *Decadence* on the cabinet, break her wrath and indignation on what in her soul she called the "hateful fancy" of my lord's apartment. She did nothing of the kind; she sat down and buried her face in her hands and began to think.

"How shall I get away?" she asked herself. "The door is locked; that sliding panel opens only on the other side. Besides, he is in there— that arrogant noble. What shall I do—the window?"

Then she went to the window. She found that outside was a very fine gold wire-work like a bird's cage close to the glass. This did not obtrude the view, but it made it impossible to escape even had she possessed the courage to take a tremendous leap into the garden. The window looked from the side of the house into a secluded portion of the grounds surrounding the villa, a plot of grass thickly planted with shrubs, and the view at the bottom out on a row of tall, strong firs and other evergreens.

"If somebody would only cross that grass, whom I could make a sign," said poor Aileen to herself. "But even then—perhaps the person could not see me through this gold wire, and if I were seen the person would most likely be only one of my lord's creatures."

Nevertheless poor Aileen stood for three weary hours and watched the dreary garden in hopes of seeing some human soul pass, and not a single creature came in sight. Only once she saw a large black dog gambolling and rolling on the grass, but evidently somebody called him away, for he soon ran off with his tail between his legs.

Aileen then went and sat down and gave way to weeping. All sorts of wild ideas entered her head. She fancied when twilight fell, and ghostly shadows began to fill the room, that the whole was but a hideous fancy, "the fabric of which dreams are made."

"Oh, if I could only waken and find it was not true; if I could wake in my little room in Belgrave Square, or in my room with kind Miss Godfrey at Athlone Castle; I was safe with her."

Aileen felt now very drowsy, but she was afraid to go to sleep. Any moment that panel might slip aside and Lord Athlone might enter, so she passed some hours of darkness in that splendid prison in a state of wakeful terror. She lay down on a soft satin couch, covered herself with her cloak, and sank into deep sleep.

Nothing whatever happened to disturb her. She was left quite alone. She awoke at dawn. The wild March winds were holding high revel in the skies; the rain fell in showers; the room was no longer heated with the hot air pipes. Aileen saw the china ornaments and the quaint cabinets gradually grow out of the greyish gloom into the shapes she remembered yesterday. She started up shivering, alarmed and hungry.

"You want something to eat," said Dame Nature in her ear. "You would be, indeed, a poor spirited wretch if you accepted a morsel of food in this house," whispered Madame *Pride* in her other ear.

"But I have not the choice," said the poor child, aloud, "for these wretches will not give me one crumb. He said I should have nothing until about two o'clock to-day; that time is

hours distant. It must be horrible to die of want. I have seen the poor among our own people in Ireland half starving, but they were not prisoners; they could go to a neighbour's house and ask for a draught of buttermilk. Ah! if I had one now."

And then began long hours of watchfulness and waiting. As the time wore on Aileen began to grow ravenous. She actually opened the cabinets in the hope of finding a withered apple or a few crumbs of stale biscuit, but all in vain. There were some gorgeously bound books in one cabinet, but Aileen was not in the mood to find solace from their pages, and so the hours went round.

There was not a gleam of sunshine the whole day long. The rain fell in torrents and dashed furiously against the windows. Aileen watched the fir trees and shrubs on the lawn tossing wildly, frantically in the wind. They were a type of her own agonized feelings.

Truly, that astute noble, Lord Athlone, had hit upon a diabolically cunning method of making the girl long for his presence. She was starving, cold, weary, and she had not the faintest hope of anything until he appeared again. There was not the sound of a voice or a footstep or the shutting of a door in the villa.

"I shall go mad," said Aileen, desperately.

At that moment the panel slid aside and Lord Athlone stood before her, still handsome, elegant, perfumed. He held a half smoked cigarette in his jewelled fingers; this manner expressing a supreme nonchalance and graceful ease.

"Good-morning," said Lord Athlone, softly.

Aileen flushed crimson. She turned her eyes aside, with weeping, upon the cold room. She did not answer him; she drew herself up and looked out upon the dreary scene.

"Are you so easily?" asked Lord Athlone, smiling maliciously upon her bosom.

Still Aileen would not speak, and Lord Athlone took out a splendid gold hunting watch, on which his monogram was worked in flashing diamonds. He opened this watch and said, looking at it with a languid smile:

"I will give you exactly twenty minutes, Miss Shadragon. If within that time you do not condescend to speak to me and tell me what you wish for, I shall go away and you will not have another chance of food until this time to-morrow."

"Shall I speak or not?" Aileen asked herself. "If I do not have food until this time to-morrow I may be dead, and it is so cruel a death."

She strove to speak, but her throat felt dry and parched. At last, with an effort, she said:

"May I have some bread and milk, Lord Athlone?"

"Ho, ho!" he answered; "then your pride has fallen an inch or so, Miss Shadragon. May you have some milk? I really don't know; I rather think you will have to be more humble before I give anything here but shelter. I have thought much over what you said to me yesterday, and I consider you the most insolent jade in creation. You require a very great deal of taking—"

"Do you want to have my murder on your conscience, Lord Athlone?"

"Upon my word it would not trouble me. I should not care a snap. I am an autocrat in my own person; I always approve of putting down rebellion with the strong hand. If I had my way, and if the Government would make me Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with unlimited powers, I would have all the fellows who can't or won't pay their rents bound hand and foot and shot in rows of a dozen every morning. The prettiest girls I would spare, but the elder women and their wretched brats should all be tied up in sacks and drowned; and as for my conscience being troubled, I assure you, pretty Shadragon, I have not one. I believe in nothing, and I fear nothing. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then you are a fiend in human shape," said Aileen.

"If you like, yes. I don't believe myself in any other fiends than those in human shape,"

continued Lord Athlone, with a sneer. "I believe in paying people well if you want them to do your bidding, and I pay my servants in this house to keep food out of your way until you have come to your senses."

"If I die, Lord Athlone," said Aileen, with a faint smile, "your servants will hold an awful secret of yours; they will have you in their power. How will you like that?"

A sudden pallor overspread the wicked aristocratic face, and a deadly gleam shone in the light-coloured eyes.

"When you are dead, Miss Shadragon," he said, "you won't be much inquired after, depend upon that. I value you for your pretty face, and if you had consented to take the place of *Crystalline*, you might have made your fortune, driven in the parks, and had half the town at your feet. You should have driven the finest pair of cream-coloured horses in London, but since you prefer being shut up here without food or lip, take your choice; you are determined and so am I."

"Dead Athlone," said Aileen, "don't judge me a little broad and water."

"Well, I will send you half a round of bread and a teacup filled with milk and water, but you won't get another morsel until this time to-morrow, half past two, when I will come again, and if you are more amiable and inclined to take the place of *Crystalline*, I may give you a glass of wine and a chop."

"Alas! the demon of hunger is all powerful. Aileen's beautiful eyes gleamed as only the eyes of the swiftest and cleverest men. Lord Athlone mentioned the wine and the chop with a cold smile. The watch noted the advantage. He looked down on the girl's bosom and smiled. "A delicious breakfast, with nicely-potatoes and a glass of nice rich old port for you this time to-morrow," he said, rising. "If you are wiser and more inclined to listen to reason, as it strikes me you will be. Indeed, Miss Shadragon, there is a visible improvement since yesterday, when your insolence passed the bounds of sanity. You are not quite so insulting to-day. What about my becoming King of England and asking you to marry me and you refusing?"

As he spoke he wheeled round and fixed his evil eyes on Aileen's face. She shrank from their cruel glare as she would have shrank from a beast of prey, and Lord Athlone laughed a cruel laugh.

"Good-afternoon," he said, coldly. "I feel quite convinced that by this time to-morrow you will be in a far more amiable frame of mind than at present."

Then he passed through the sliding panel in the wall, and Aileen was left once more alone. However, in about ten minutes' time she heard the key grate in the door at the other end of the room, and there entered the little green page.

Somebody outside in the corridor locked the door upon him, and he advanced. He carried a tray on which was a small teacup filled with sky blue milk and water, and a plate on which lay a little coin piece of stale bread. Aileen looked up in the boy's pert, young face.

"Won't you help me to escape?" she said. "You are young. Have you a sister?"

"Yes, I have two; they both drive their ponies in the park; one's an actress. I am astonished at you, Miss Moore. Why, my lord is mad for you, but if you hold out he'll—"

At this moment the door at the end of the room was violently opened and a deep, commanding voice cried:

"Come here, Christopher; you must not gossip there!"

Christopher then beat a hasty retreat, and Aileen was left with her saucy repartee. She ravenously devoured it, and then she felt more hungry than before.

"What shall I do; I am afraid I shall go mad," said Aileen.

And she burst into helpless, desolate weeping.

EMILY, LADY ATHLONE, was more envied than any other woman in London. She had literally

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the world at her feet. Gorgeous state, great wealth, youth, talent, superb beauty, were hers. Besides all these, her husband was heir to an earldom, and one of the handsomest and most dashing officers in the Guards.

Numbers of belles had sighed for him in vain during two whole seasons. When this elegant nobleman chose he could make himself the idol of the fair sex. He was horribly sickle. Everybody said that of him, but that only made ladies admire him the more.

Previous to her marriage Lady Emily Fairleigh had not been credited with possessing an ounce of sentiment or a morsel of what is called "romance" in her whole organisation. She herself had given it out that she was marrying Lord Athlone for his heirship to the earldom, and that he was marrying her for her uncle's wealth.

"We don't care a straw for each other," the modish lady used to say, with a laugh, "and we shall be, I am sure, twenty times happier than if we were sentimental noddles, for we shall never be jealous."

Thus Lady Emily had spoken; thus she had believed, but alas for the poor young bride she had most unfortunately discovered all at once that she possessed a heart warm, tender, clinging, passionate. She had never really loved Edward Athlone; her more volatile nature had never comprehended the depth and earnestness of his; but alas for her peace, alas for the whole of her future, Lady Athlone adored with a jealous adoration her worthless, heartless, soulless husband.

She soon found that he did not care one straw for her; indeed, she discovered quite by accident, that beautiful as she was he did not even consider her pretty, for one day she found in his drawer a letter from one of his friends, a young officer on duty in India. It ran in one part as follows:

"So you are to marry the Fairleigh, the society beauty, about whom all the world raves except yourself; and you say that in your opinion no straw-coloured woman is ever good-looking. People of taste, poets and painters, all the Fairleigh's tresses glorious golden; and all them straw-coloured. Fie upon you, Dick; but if the lady's tresses are of straw her fortune is not, and so, my boy, I congratulate you."

A charming letter this for a young bride to find a month after her marriage day. Lady Athlone felt as if she had received her death blow. Strange as it may seem, the beautiful nature had not a friend whom she could consult or confide in save Miss Thompson, her maid, who had already told her that she considered Aileen Moore a bold jade, who tried and to attract the attention of Lord Athlone. It was the night before Aileen was devoured away to Belgrave Square that Lady Athlone returned from a grand ball, where she had been acknowledged belle and beauty.

Royalty had signalled out the lovely bride to her honour. She had danced with two princes of the blood. Half-a-dozen young male peers had given themselves to her. She had floated round the room in her white, gauzy skirt, looped my with illies; orient pearls were in her golden hair, and on her snowy neck and arms gleamed blue turquoise set round with blinding priceless diamonds. The mingled attire and the fire of these glorious jewels set off her blonde, exquisite loveliness to perfection. More than one artist in the crowd made a sketch of the exquisite face and the perfect form. The next morning the society papers would write laud in the praise of her resplendent beauty. Lady Athlone knew all of this—knew how she was envied, admired, adored, and yet when she entered her luxurious chamber in the Belgrave Square mansion she sank down on a silken couch before the brilliant fire and clasped her jewelled hands and spoke fierce words of anger through her closely shut teeth, and she took the rich ornaments from her white throat and arms and flung them scornfully upon the ground.

"I hate them," she said—"those jewels born to me. I wish I was an Irish peasant girl with

cows to milk and chickens to feed, and baskets of eggs and butter to carry to market on my arm. I wish I wore thick clumsy shoes, or no shoes at all. I am the most miserable wretch under the sun."

Lady Athlone spoke these wild words aloud. Thompson, the tall, dark maid with the masculine face and figure, came stealthily, silently, from a recess in the splendid room, knelt down and picked up the jewels, carried them to the exquisite inlaid toilette table, and locked them safely in the ivory jewel case.

Then she returned towards her mistress, who still sat in a state of silent, sullen gloom before the fire, her eyes fixed on vacancy. Lady Athlone took no notice whatever of her maid.

"Shall I disrobe your ladyship?" asked Thompson.

"I don't care; you can leave me here all the night if you like; it does not matter to me where I am or what I do to-night."

"Ah, my lady, I am very glad you put a limit upon this season of despair," replied Thompson, with a smile. "It is only to-night that you and the world, whose idol you are, are at variance. Only take a cup of chocolate and try to sleep, and in the morning you will wake up in the brightest, happiest spirits."

"Chocolate," repeated the society beauty, contemptuously. "I require a something that shall steep my senses in oblivion for at least some hours. With this pain at my heart how am I to sleep?"

"Is your ladyship ill? Then let Sir James Charlton be sent for."

"Stop!" cried Lady Athlone; "no physician can cure me. I suffer—ah! you know it, Thompson, because all the glitter and pomp and flattery in the world are worthless to me, because my husband holds me in contempt."

"I would hold him in the same," Thompson began.

Lady Athlone stopped her.

"You know nothing of me. I did not know myself until I became his wife. Before that, just a week or two before, I began to suspect that Richard Athlone was dearer to me than anything else on earth; but I tried to stifle the feeling. I said to myself, 'In society the wife who is in love with her own husband is laughed at behind her back,' but for all that my love for this worthless, heartless man grew day by day until it became a monster, a tyrant. And meanwhile he spurns me, mocks me, and spends his time elsewhere. He was not even at the ball to-night, the most brilliant of the season. He will return in an hour, go to his own room, and breakfast there alone. We shall not meet until dinner; we never do. And there will be strangers present. After that the opera or a ball. He will leave me to my devices. I wish I was dead."

Thompson put her hand before her mouth and coughed. Then she said:

"Your ladyship may have a rival."

Lady Athlone ground her white teeth.

"If I thought that," cried the impassioned young bride, "I would kill her."

"Less violent measures might be found by means of which she might be put out of my lord's reach. Your rival is the Irish peasant girl whom you took from the roadside when she was with the ruffians who stole the jewels, and who it is believed killed another man. That Aileen Moore, or I am much mistaken, secretly coquetting with my lord. I doubt not the jade hopes that he will give her an establishment as extravagant as that he gave Crystallite."

Lady Athlone spoke a few angry words to her maid.

"Thompson, how do you know all this?" she said. "I know that you hate her, and once or twice I have caught my husband staring at her, but she is a virtuous girl, though somehow I don't like her as I did."

Thompson burst into a bitter laugh.

"We will watch her, my lady," she said, "and I am very much mistaken if we shall not discover something that will astonish you very much."

"Tell me plainly what you know," cried Lady Athlone. "Tell me the worst at once."

Now, the fact was there was no "worst" to say. Miss Thompson knew nothing more against Aileen than those vague rumours which had reached her at Athlone Castle, and which she had already faithfully retailed to Lady Athlone, with the effect of making that young personage look indeed with coolness on Aileen, but never seriously suspect her, and Miss Thompson on this occasion had nothing more to tell her lady than what she had already told her.

She was an envious, spiteful, evil-tempered, and hard-hearted person, but she was incapable of a deliberate lie. She was worldly-wise enough to be aware that such did not pay, and she was obliged to confess now to the unhappy Lady Athlone that she was only guided by her instincts, and as yet had no absolute facts upon which to ground her assertion.

"But I am as certain that he thinks of that creature, ay, and that she thinks of him, as that you, my dear lady, sit there with that pale, unhappy face. You will lose your beauty, Lady Emily, if you allow grief to prey so deeply on you."

"My beauty," replied Lady Athlone, with a bitter smile, "has failed to charm the only man I ever loved or can ever love, my husband. Thompson, watch, be ever on the alert. Watch Lord Athlone day and night. If you find out who my rival is you shall have a thousand pounds."

Thompson's black eyes gleamed.

"I will soon find out, my lady," she answered. "And now let me persuade you to take some chocolate, into which I will put a few drops of cognac, and then you will sleep."

Lady Athlone, sighing heavily, yielded to the entreaties of her maid. She suffered herself to be disrobed, drank the chocolate, and laid down and slept soundly. The next day she met her lord at breakfast, and asked him why he had not come to the ball.

"I hate balls," answered Lord Athlone, wearily.

He did not even look at his lovely bride of two months, who, attired in the freshest, daintiest, and costliest of morning costumes, sat before the silver and Dresden tea equipage in an elegant room, where everything spoke of refinement and luxury. How happy this highly born, wealthy, handsome young couple ought to have been according to all the canons of worldly wisdom and expediency, and all the teachings of fashion and pride and what is called society.

My lord leaned back in his chair. He was reading a sporting paper, which he held in one hand, while with the other he stirred his coffee. His feet, encased in velvet slippers, were stretched out. Nothing could have expressed indifference towards his lovely companion more than this careless attitude of her lord.

"Richard," said Lady Athlone, "I believe you hate me."

He only smiled languidly.

"I wish you would not talk," he said. "I am reading such a capital joke."

"I hate capital jokes," said the young wife, petulantly, "and I think you are a cold and unkind to me, Lord Athlone."

Her voice trembled, but the young lord only raised his brows.

"I do believe you hate me," said Lady Athlone, again.

"Don't talk nonsense, my dear," said her husband.

"My dear!" Ah, Richard, how seldom it is that you speak to me even as kindly as that, and I have been idiot enough to give you my poor heart."

"Take it back—take it back, my dear," responded Lord Athlone, and he let the paper drop and swallowed his coffee. "I don't want hearts, sweet Emily. I have not one to offer you. I am a heartless individual. Go your own way, my pretty wife, and let me go mine. Let us have no more talk of hearts, Emily. All that nonsense is for those schoolboys and schoolgirls who send valentines to each other."

He stooped and kissed his wife on her white brow, then passed out of the room whistling a gay operatic air. Lady Athlone was very pale.

Her eyes were tearless, and she felt as if her heart were turned to stone.

That very evening Lady Athlone drove up to her door about seven o'clock, and descending languidly, proceeded to ascend the grand lighted staircase that led to her own apartments on the first corridor. She met Thompson, who had a pale, scared face.

"My lady, where is Aileen?"

"Aileen! What do you mean?"

"Did not your ladyship send to-day a note for that girl to follow you to the studio of a Mr. Hongcourt, or some such name, an artist? A page in green livery came here in a cab with a note for Aileen. She went away with him. That was about twelve o'clock, and she has not yet returned."

"Then she has run away," replied Lady Athlone. "I know nothing whatever about it. I have spent the whole day at Hampton with Lord and Lady Chealedown, at Chesledown Court."

Lady Athlone felt relieved. She thought that if Aileen were indeed her rival, as Thompson had stated, she was now out of her husband's way, and that that was a good thing. It never struck her that Thompson meant her to understand she supposed them to be together.

"My lady," said Thompson, "I am almost certain that Lord Athlone is at the bottom of this, and that they are now together."

Lady Athlone quite staggered at this horrible suggestion.

"If it is so," hissed the jealous wife, "I will kill her."

"And she will deserve it," answered the maid. "But while I am dressing your ladyship for dinner I will tell you what I have heard, what I have found out, and what I suspect."

Lady Athlone suffered herself to be led to her own apartments, where Thompson dressed her for dinner, during which process Thompson related her suspicions.

"The page who came here pretending he came from you wore a green livery," she said, "and I have heard that my lord has a most sumptuous villa out St. John's Wood way, where he keeps a set of servants the livery of whom is dark green. A boy to whom I spoke followed the cab a long way until he was quite tired, and when he returned an hour afterwards he said it had gone towards Regent's Park, but had by that time begun to go so fast that he could not follow it any further. My lord will return to dinner as if nothing had happened, but let me tell you that I, with my own eyes, saw him this very morning in the street making signs to Aileen as she stood at the window in her apartment."

"Thompson," said Lady Athlone, "if what you say is true, and if you take me there and I find her in his house, I will kill her. Yes, they may hang me if they please, but I will kill her, and I will give you a thousand pounds."

"If my lord has a villa out that way," said Miss Thompson, with a malicious smile, "and if, as I believe, that girl is there, we shall find them, never fear; but, my dear lady, keys of gold will unlock all the doors on earth. Give me two hundred pounds, Lady Athlone, and I will engage to pay your way and mine into the villa in St. John's Wood, and to surprise the two guilty creatures who have wronged you."

"Bring me that desk," said Lady Athlone; "you shall have more than two hundred pounds, Thompson."

Another weary day, another cold, dark night, has the wretched Aileen passed in the gorgeous room whose luxuries mock at the hunger and cold which are gnawing her like vultures. She is cold, for the supply of hot air has been removed, and the grates are fireless; so cold that she cannot sleep, for she has nothing but her cloak to cover her, and the wind is north-east, and sleet and hail are falling. Besides all this Aileen is enduring now the fiercest pangs of hunger. She is just at that stage when poor humanity would almost barter its soul for a loaf of bread.

"Oh, if he would but come I—I would almost promise anything—anything," said the unhappy child to herself.

It seemed as if her brain were on fire, as if she were just lapsing into a species of madness. All kinds of false images tormented her. It was far on in the morning of the third day, and she fancied every now and anon that she saw loaves, cakes, biscuits, on the tables and the cabinets.

She rushed towards them, and they eluded her grasp. At last she sank down weeping on a couch, and then the panel slid back and there stood before her, elegant, graceful, smiling his cynical smile, no less a personage than Richard Lord Athlone.

"Well, have you come to your senses?" asked my lord.

"Oh, my lord, my lord!" wailed Aileen, "give me some food, I entreat you; you promised a chop and some bread and some wine."

"Well, you shall have all, my dear Aileen; all are ready and prepared in the next room, but when you have dined you must kneel at my feet and kiss my hand and ask my forgiveness for the rude speeches you made. Will you promise that?"

"Yes—oh, yes, I—I promise that," said poor Aileen.

Her eyes were very wild; the pallor of famine was on her cheeks and parched lips; her brain reeled, and as she made a step towards the panel in the wall, she would have fallen had not Lord Athlone encircled her with his arm. She looked at him in that moment of weakness and stupor almost as a friend, for now she could scent the cooked repast, and she smiled faintly as she said:

"Don't let me die—not of hunger, not of hunger."

He took her in and placed her before a table on which was spread a dainty meal—lamb chops, a cold roast fowl, potatoes dressed by a French cook, rolls and cakes of fine white bread, wine, grapes, jelly.

"Sit down, my charming Aileen, and eat a good meal."

Aileen was so famished that if she had believed the food was poisoned she would still have eaten it. She devoured rather than ate. Then she drank wine and water.

"Have you done, my darling?" said Lord Athlone, at length.

"Yes, but I am tired—oh, so tired, so strangely drowsy."

"It is the effect of a good meal. I have not drugged you, Aileen," said Lord Athlone. "I would starve you into obedience, but I would scorn to stupify you. Don't sleep, it might make you ill. Rouse yourself; drink coffee."

He rang a bell and a footman brought Aileen a cup of strong coffee.

"Drink that," said Lord Athlone.

Aileen drank it and felt brighter.

"Now come and sit in this chair," said Lord Athlone.

And he placed Aileen in a chair right in front of a blazing fire.

"Warm yourself," said he, "and listen to me while I tell you how much I love you, and what are my plans for your future happiness."

At that moment a laugh, wild and savage, mocking and yet agonised as the terrible laugh of a maniac, broke on the ears of Lord Athlone. He started to his feet in alarm, for there entered by a private door his wife, his beautiful wife Emily. By her side stood her maid Thompson, whose face gleamed with malicious joy.

"Now!" cried Lady Emily, "tell me what you mean by having no heart, my lord; it seems you have one for that wretched girl!"

"Lady Athlone," said the nobleman, "leave this house; you have no business here; such conduct is bad form and unworthy of an earl's daughter and a noble's wife."

"But I will have her life—her life!" shrieked Lady Athlone; "I will not rest until I have silenced her for ever!"

And as she spoke she rushed madly towards Aileen.

(To be Continued.)

FASHIONS IN JAVA.

In an evening promenade the gentleman arrays himself in a dress suit and carries a cane, but he sallies forth bareheaded and makes you think someone has stolen his hat, until you learn the custom of the country. The ladies are likewise bareheaded, but they have their hair dressed rather elaborately, and there are unkind gossips who say that some of them have it so arranged their maids can dress it in the anteroom while the owner is slumbering in the dormitory. The fashions of Europe prevail, but with a good many modifications. Dresses are generally worn without trains except at grand balls and other festivities, when the wardrobe vie with those of Paris or London.

The morning array of the ladies is the oddest of all when viewed through foreign eyes, and it takes one several days to comprehend that it was proper to gaze upon the fair creatures that were visible upon the verandas or whom I encountered in the streets of Batavia or Buitenzorg. Their dress was the loose sarong, or native petticoat, which resembles an embroidered tablecloth gathered about the waist, and held in place by a knot tied in one corner and pushed inside the fold.

Above this sarong there is a loose sack of white muslin coming well up on the neck and falling below the waist. As far as a stranger can judge, these garments comprise the morning dress of the European lady in Java, or at any rate they are the only ones visible. The slippers that cover her unstockinged feet must be mentioned, and with her hair hanging loose over her shoulders, and her hands innocent of gloves, is it any wonder that a bashful bachelor averts his eyes when he first meets dame or maiden in her morning walk?

INTERESTING FACTS.

The tomb of Edward I., who died in 1307, was opened January 2, 1770, after four hundred and sixty-three years had elapsed. His body was almost perfect. Canute (the Dane), who crossed over to England in 1017, was found 1779, by the workmen who repaired Winchester Cathedral, where his body had reposed nearly seven hundred and fifty years, perfectly fresh. In 1509, three Roman soldiers, fully equipped with warlike implements, were dug out of a bed of peat in Ireland, where they had probably lain fifteen hundred years. Their bodies were perfectly fresh and plump.

In the reign of James II. of England, after the fall of the church at Astley, in Warwickshire, there was taken up the corpse of Thomas Gray, Marquis of Dorset, who was buried the 10th of October, 1530, in the twenty-second year of Henry VII.; and although it had lain there seventy-eight years, the eyes, hair, flesh, nail and joints remained as though it had been newly buried. Robert Braybrook, who was consecrated Bishop of London in 1331, and who died in 1404, and was buried in St. Paul's, was taken out of his tomb, after the great fire in 1666, during the repairs of the cathedral, and although he had lain there no less than two hundred and sixty-two years, his body was found firm as to skin, hair, joints and nails.

The Convent de St. Domingo was lately demolished in search of treasure supposed to be concealed there, and the body of Prince Rodriguez taken out, who had been buried alive in 1565, exactly as when placed two hundred and fifty years before. His daughter, two-and-a-half years of age, was lying at her father's feet, and as perfectly preserved as himself. The position of his hands shows that he was suspended by the body and neck till he died. Marks of the cord and of the burning iron are deeply recorded on various parts of the body. His hair and beard were firm, his skin natural in hue and texture, without the least trace of decomposition in any part.

THE APPROACHING NATIONAL STOCKTAKING.

ONCE in every ten years an account is taken of the numerical progress of the nation, and something more. If "counting noses" only were the object of the census, it would have its value, but only a small portion of what really attaches to it, for it shows us not only how many are added to the nation in the course of a decade, but what proportion the sexes bear to each other, what are the ages of the persons enumerated, their occupation, birthplace, and other particulars of more or less interest to every person in the realm. Authority is to be obtained during the session of the new Parliament for another of these national stocktakings; and though the enumeration will not take place until April in next year there will be notes of preparation presently sounded which will be sufficiently loud and distinct to call public attention to one of the most important events which can happen in connection with this or any other country's history.

The custom of taking a census of the people of this country is comparatively modern, dating back only to 1801. As regards Rome it is of respectable antiquity, having been adopted so long ago as 566 B.C. It was then taken chiefly for the purposes of taxation, and was one of the functions of the Censors. At Athens there was a census taken in 317 B.C. But a numbering of the people occurred much earlier than either of those dates, for was not Moses commanded to do it as regards the Israelites, and did not David incur severe punishment for his presumption in counting the people, which operation occupied nine months and twenty days, the result being a muster roll of 1,300,000 "fighting men"? And did not the three days' pestilence carry off 70,000 of the people, from Dan even unto Beersheba?—C. H.

LOST THROUGH GOLD;

OR,

A BEAUTIFUL SINNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FRUITLESS QUEST.

He comes! Nor want, nor cold his course delay.

JOHNSON.

GEORGE ARNOLD had no suspicion that he was being followed. Thanks to his having made a hasty at that interview in the kirkyard, Mr. James Tyrit was enabled considerably to improve on his orders. Instead of merely keeping Mr. Arnold in sight he could go boldly to Keston and lay his hand on the girl for whose arrest the whole police force had been planning more than a week.

By a lucky chance he had discovered her retreat. The rest was easy. The train stopped for an hour at Aberdeen, and Tyrit picked up a trusty underling and a Bradshaw at that town. Then he felt pretty well satisfied with himself, and divided the day between smoking and light refreshment. As night came on he fell into a nearly sleep, and awoke ready for any amount of fatigue when at two minutes past six the train came steaming into King's Cross Station.

But George Arnold, full of aching dread for the fate of the girl he loved, had passed the whole journey in making plans for her escape, only to find they were fruitless, and that until Lord Aston's murderer were discovered Alice's best and indeed only chance of safety lay in remaining where she was.

Throughout that long journey George never

found forgetfulness in sleep. Still weak from his accident and fatigued by the horrible

surprise at Rouen, and his hurried return to

Scotland, on his arrival in London Mr. Arnold's appearance was simply terrible. His eyes were bloodshot and looked staring out of his head; his hands shook; he tottered as he walked, and his haggard face was no fit object to present to Mrs. Hardy.

He drove straight to Victoria Station, to discover that there was no train to Bromley before 8:50. He sat down in the waiting-room to pass the two tedious hours as best he could, but worn out alike in mind and body, he dropped into a heavy and dreamless sleep, his head falling forward on his breast.

Mr. Tyrit and his underling, looking as fresh and trim as possible, hailed a hansom cab. Mr. Tyrit had studied Bradshaw most effectually, so his address to the cabman was:

"Double fare if you catch the 6:30 at Holborn. I want to get home to breakfast."

Cabby was equal to the emergency. He dashed through the streets on this cold winter's morning so rapidly that Mr. Tyrit and his underling were standing on the platform, tickets in hand, by the time the train was ready to start.

They reached Bromley soon after seven, and a conveyance being unprocurable, trudged bravely on to Keston. They both stopped at the "Red Cross" for a little creature comfort, and the underling informing the landlord he had come from London to see his brother, who was gardener to a Mrs. Hardy, that worthy man kindly gave him full directions to reach The Grange.

A strange gloom hung over The Grange that wintry morning, although now nearly nine o'clock. The blinds of the principal rooms were lowered, and Mr. Tyrit had to ring twice before the page made his appearance, surprise on his face at the sight of such very early visitors.

"Is Mrs. Hardy at home?"

"No," returned Thomas, omitting the customary "sir," as he was sharp enough to perceive his questioner was not quite a gentleman, however spick and span he might look.

"You mean she is not up, I suppose?" returned the detective, sharply. "Well, my business is not with her. I wish to see the young lady who is stopping with her—Miss Duncan?"

"You can't do that," delighted at being able to administer a snub to the party who had disturbed him over his breakfast. "Miss Duncan went away last night, she and the mistress too, all of a sudden."

Mr. Tyrit's first impulse was to deny the truth of this, then he changed his mind. Everything about the house seemed to confirm the boy's statement; the closed rooms, the great stillness, all spoke of a deserted home.

"When will they be back?"

"I don't know," Mrs. Hill does, perhaps. She's the housekeeper. You can see her if you like."

Mr. Tyrit did like, so he was ushered into the little room Dorothea called her study, his underling being accommodated with a chair in the hall. He was not kept long waiting. A respectable elderly woman soon appeared.

"Miss Duncan has gone away with Mrs. Hardy," she began. "My mistress was sent for last night to see one of her relations, who is dying, and she could not go alone."

Mr. Tyrit wondered how much of this was true. The tale sounded plausible enough.

"I am sorry to hear that; my business with Miss Duncan is of great importance. When will she be back?"

"I hardly know. Mrs. Hardy said they might be away for a day or for some weeks, it all depended on how they found her friend."

"Can you give the address?"

"Indeed, I can't," she replied, pleasantly. "The mistress went off in a great hurry. All she said was that anyone who came could write to her at Mr. Hardy's, in the Temple."

"I thought she was a widow."

"So she is. Mr. Hardy is the mistress's cousin. He manages everything for her."

"You don't mean the barrister?"

"Yes, a clever gentleman he is, I hear. Shall I give you his address?"

But Mr. Tyrit declined.

"I am very much disappointed," he said, slowly. "I have come all the way from Scotland to see Miss Duncan."

"It's a long journey to take for nothing," said the housekeeper, sympathisingly. "Miss Duncan comes from Scotland herself, Aberdeen, I think Mrs. Hardy said."

Mr. Tyrit kept his seat. He showed no intention of going, and Mrs. Hill, suddenly struck with hospitable thoughts, asked if he had breakfasted. He had not, and she rang the bell at once to order refreshments.

"Mrs. Hardy thinks all the world of Miss Duncan," she said, confidentially. "I'm sure if you're a friend of hers she'd like you to take something before you go."

He did not refuse. The cold turkey and French coffee which presently appeared received a fair share of his attention, but the housekeeper herself a great deal more. He was revolving a great question: Did she believe the tales she had told him, or did she know the danger in which Alice Duncan stood?

"It's a bitter day," observed Mrs. Hill. "It's a good thing my mistress didn't have far to go for she is always delicate in winter; but James said they were only going as far as London, and that's no journey."

"Bromley's the nearest station, I suppose?"

"Yes, but they went up from Chislehurst last night. I was surprised to hear it. It seemed so out of the way."

"I suppose the telegram did not come till quite late?"

"The telegram?" looking puzzled.

"The telegram to call your mistress away."

"Oh, it wasn't a telegram. Mr. Carden came over and told Mrs. Hardy; he's a neighbour. I don't know how he came to hear it. He's no relation to the mistress."

"Could you give me his address? He may be able to tell me where I shall find Miss Duncan."

"He lives at the Ivy House. It's not far from here, and in a straight line. You can't fail to find it."

"Thank you."

The Ivy House presented a very different appearance to The Grange. A clatter of plates and dishes, the sounds of many voices, the opening and shutting of doors, proclaimed that breakfast was going on. Leaving his underling to amuse himself in the garden, Mr. Tyrit gave the parlour-maid his card, and asked her to take it to her master at once.

It was inscribed, "Jamer Tyrit, Scotland Yard," and he had taken the precaution to write below in pencil, "On business of great importance." There was no denial, no delay here. Very soon he was facing the lawyer in a gloomy study, as different a place from Mrs. Hardy's bright little sanctum as well could be.

"I can guess your errand in this neighbourhood," began Mr. Carden, eagerly. "I was on the point of writing to inform the authorities that the person accused of the Aston murder was living under an assumed name at The Grange. Anything I can do to assist the ends of justice will be most gladly done."

The detective looked at his companion thoughtfully. Accustomed to read between the lines and see in many seemingly simple speeches a hidden meaning, he knew at once that James Carden had a personal interest in hunting down Miss Tracy; but if so, why had he not done it before? He had had time enough and to spare.

"You can be of great assistance," he replied, shortly; "you can give us Miss Tracy's address."

"That is easily done. She is living at The Grange, a house about half a mile off, as companion to a Mrs. Hardy. I'll show you the place myself if you like."

"Quite unnecessary, my dear sir. Pray be seated," for Mr. Carden had risen in his eagerness. "I have been to The Grange and the bird has flown."

"Impossible!" returned the solicitor, decidedly. "They have been trying to hoodwink you. Mrs. Hardy has a great attachment

for her friend, and she would not scruple to tell a few falsehoods to screen her."

"She did not tell me any. Mrs. Hardy has left The Grange and taken Alice Tracy along with her."

"No."

Mr. Tyrit had never seen any face wear such a look of bitter disappointment. The lawyer positively withheld.

"Didn't you know it?" the detective asked, slowly.

"I had no idea of it. I saw them both yesterday, and was at The Grange again in the afternoon."

"The story goes that you went over to tell Mrs. Hardy of the dangerous illness of one of her relations, and that she set off with her companion and Mr. Hardy."

"That's false, every word of it! I don't know Mrs. Hardy's relations."

"The servants believe it firmly. She went in the carriage to Chislehurst Station and took tickets for London."

"She'll never go to London, Duke Hardy is too clever to let her. It would be the worst place in the world for them. The tickets to London were only a blind. Depend upon it they got out at the next station and took the first train down. We may have lost her altogether. You can get anywhere from the S. E. line. They may have crossed to France."

He looked quite as vexed at the catastrophe as the detective. His love for justice was evidently very great.

"There's the Extradition Treaty," remarked Mr. Tyrit coolly; "but we shall have them before that. A young girl and an old lady are rather a remarkable couple."

"Old lady! Mrs. Hardy is barely Miss Tracy's age, and she has the spirit of a lion. Why couldn't you come a day sooner?"

"Why didn't you send for us?"

"I wasn't sure till yesterday."

"And you went over to The Grange to verify your suspicions?"

"Partly."

"This Mr. Hardy, is he any use? Which side would he take?"

"The girl's, most likely. He has a wonderful stock of partisanship. Defends wreathes for nothing, and all that sort of thing."

"Hardly the man to help us."

"The man to put every obstacle in our way. Duke Hardy's a bad foe, for he generally conquers."

"I'm off to Chislehurst," said the detective, coldly. "If you hear anything fresh, Mr. Carden, we may depend on your letting us know."

"Of course. I'll keep a sharp lookout on The Grange. It wouldn't be a bad plan to watch Duke Hardy too. He's safe to go backwards and forwards wherever they are."

"Hum!" soliloquised James Tyrit, when he found himself safely outside Ivy House, "the case grows stronger. That man's more anxious about it than we are. What's he got to do with it? Is he one of Miss Tracy's rejected lovers that he is so bitter against her?"

Arrived at Chislehurst a fresh failure awaited him. Booking clerk and porters alike testified to the fact that the party he named had taken tickets to London and entered the train; but there all clue failed.

"They certainly got into the train," declared the station-master. "I saw them myself, two young ladies and a gentleman. I noticed them particularly, because one was in widow's weeds and she looked so young for them. They got in at Chislehurst, but there's no telling where they went on to London. They might have got out at any station up the line."

"The porters there would know?"

"They might and they might not. There'd be nothing easier than for them to catch a down train and get in without tickets. Swells wouldn't mind the expense."

Mr. Tyrit felt considerably less triumphant than he had done the night before. Then he thought Alice Tracy as surely his captive as if he had already taken her. Now she seemed just to have slipped through his fingers. He had been so near victory that failure was doubly

trying, and that it would prove a failure he really began to believe.

"That fellow Carden may be of use," he muttered. "He would give anything to have a shot at those two women, though whether it's Miss Tracy or her friend he wants to hit I can't quite make out."

In spite of Mr. Carden's warning, in spite of his own conviction that it would be useless, the detective turned his steps to the Temple that afternoon, and made a call at Mr. Hardy's chambers. His reception was hardly encouraging.

He stated that his business was of great importance, but apparently Mr. Hardy was not anxious to hear it, for he kept him in the outer office for more than an hour before graciously accorded him an audience. The two men looked critically at one another.

Both knew the world well. Both had heard of each other as useful to the profession they both in widely different fashions followed. Duke was cool and collected. He showed no more curiosity about his visitor's errand than did the office chairs and tables, and he left it to Tyrit to begin the interview.

"I have come to ask you for Mrs. Hardy's address."

"Mrs. Raymond Hardy?" quizzically. "She lives at The Grange, Keston, near Bromley, in Kent."

"I have been there, and they referred me to you."

"Did they?" musing a pen.

"The housekeeper said you could give me her mistress's address."

"The housekeeper made a mistake. I can forward any message or letter to my cousin, I cannot give up her address. You probably heard her absence from home is only temporary."

"Mr. Hardy, it is of no use beating about the bush. I hold a warrant for the arrest of Miss Tracy, and she was last seen in your cousin's company at Chislehurst Station."

"Possibly."

"As a supporter of the law you can hardly shelter a criminal."

"You underrate my powers. Besides, by the English law, everyone is considered innocent until proved guilty."

"I have come for the address, and I mean to have it," exasperated at his listener's coolness. "I have hunted many a missing criminal before, and I mean to hunt Miss Tracy."

"Doubtless; but as she's not hidden in my office it will hardly avail you to hunt her here. Lucy," calling to a clerk, "show this gentleman out."

He went on writing with inimitable coolness, and the discomfited detective beat a hasty retreat.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE QUEEN'S NAME.

Onward, for ever onward,
Unto the ceaseless main—
But life may be a tidal stream—
That seaward tick again!

It seemed to Dorothea Hardy that no time had ever passed so slowly with her as the days that followed that Sunday journey, for at every moment, waking or sleeping, she was troubled with the thought that the police might be on their track.

She herself could hardly have explained the warm affection she felt for Alice. Dora loved very few people, but for those she did love she was ready to suffer anything if only it could serve them. Besides in those years—not yet so long ago—of her girlhood, before she became a rich man's wife, she had been alone in the world, and had found it a harsh, cruel place.

Alice's loneliness and evident unhappiness first attracted her, then, as their intimacy progressed, she grew to love her as a sister. The mistress of The Grange was unutterably dull at Sandgate. At first she derived some amusement from the change in her and her friend's personality.

It was so strange to call Alice Mrs. Gray, and to be addressed as Miss Gray, the name of her maiden days. But very soon she tired of this relaxation. She could not read, her mind was too unsettled, she said; and she must not write for fear of giving her address. So that, altogether, time hung heavily on her hands, and she beguiled its tedium by spending a great deal of it in the open air.

She and Alice often wandered about alone. When they were together one subject filled their thoughts. They shared a common fear, a common dread. When they were apart Alice thought it might weigh less heavily on Dorothea, and yet this led to a heavy trouble.

Alice was indoors reading a volume of poems whose beauty distracted her from her sad thoughts, and Dora, in the very black serge dress in which she had travelled from Keston, was walking on the esplanade. It was the fourth day of their stay at Sandgate. The weather had changed, and the air was soft and balmy.

Mrs. Hardy sat down on a wooden bench and was soon lost in wondering very much how long her banishment from home would last. She never noticed the approach of footsteps until, looking up, she saw that two men had seated themselves on the bench, one on either side. A presentiment of ill seized her as she saw their faces, and she felt thankful that Alice was not with her. She was just going to rise when a hand was laid on her arm.

"In the Queen's name."

Dora shuddered. She understood the position at a glance. Her ruse had succeeded perfectly. These men had come to arrest Alice, and hearing she was the unmarried companion, believed she was the girl they sought. Alice, at home in her widow's cap and wedding-ring, would be perfectly safe.

Unlikely as they really were a cursory description of either of the friends might apply to the other. Both were slight and delicate looking; both were fair and in deep mourning. Dora called her eyes green and Alice's were blue, that was the chief discrepancy. Golden-brown might apply to either's hair. Mrs. Hardy looked her accusér full in the face, but did not speak.

"You've given us a pretty chase, miss, but we have you safe enough now."

"How did you find me out?"

"Well, I don't know that there's any harm in telling you, miss. A friend of the lady you're with recognised Mrs. Hardy and saw her go into the house where you lodge. She wrote to Miss Carden, and Mr. Carden, knowing the fix we were in, telegraphed on to us."

"How very kind of him."

James Tyrit looked at her in wondering admiration of her courage.

"So going to the house, miss, and hearing you were out here, we thought we'd do the thing quietly and not disturb the other lady."

"What do you want?"

"You know that, miss, as well as we do, I suspect."

"I never harmed a hair of Lord Aston's head. I never tried to injure him, so help me, Heaven!"

"It's easy enough to say so, miss. If you can prove it we shall not want you any longer. But you must please to come to Scotland now, where you'll have to appear before the Baillie."

She sat watching them as one in a daze.

"You'd like to go home first for a few minutes," suggested Mr. Tyrit, who felt touched at the sight of the pale young face so unlike those of the criminals he was used to track. "We don't want to inconvenience you at all, so long as we get you safe to Scotland."

"I would rather go now," answered the supposed prisoner. "Only you are sure of this thing, if they believe I did not do it I can come back?"

"By the next train," returned the detective. "You seem mighty sure of proving your innocence, miss; but there's a heavy case against you."

Dora rose quickly. The widow's one wish was to get safely away before Alice appeared on the scene. If she could only persuade her captors she was indeed the person they sought until she

got to London Miss Tracy would be able to leave Sandgate and escape to some place of shelter. It was not in Mrs. Hardy's plan to go to Scotland, but if worst came to worst she was quite prepared for a pilgrimage to the land of cakes.

"I am quite ready to go with you," she said, firmly; "but you will let me write a line to my friend. She is all alone here, and if she hears nothing she will be so frightened."

"You can go and see her if you like," was the gracious reply.

Dora took an old letter from her pocket and tore off the clean half sheet, then with the pencil on her watch-chain she wrote the following lines:

"If I should not be home to-day go up to London by the 4 o'clock train and drive straight to Mr. Hardy."

It was very short and simple. Had the letter read it he could hardly have objected. She dared not put more on such a scrap of paper. If she and her warders went up to town now they would be clear of Charing Cross Station long before Alice reached it.

What she was to do when she did get there Dora had no idea. It never occurred to the widow that Duke Hardy might not like a young lady invading his chambers. He seemed the only person able to befriend Alice, therefore it was right for her to go to him.

The three started. Dora with her hands on the detective's arm, so close to him that escape was impossible even had she attempted it. The underling followed in the rear, and as they passed the apartments Mrs. Hardy had so lately left he knocked at the door and delivered her note, requesting it might be given to Mrs. Gray at once. So much courtesy. James Tyrit thought he could afford to a prisoner who had yielded to him so obediently.

"You take it wonderfully coolly," he said, admiringly, as they reached the station. "One would think you had been arrested every day."

"I am innocent."

"Everyone says that, but it doesn't make 'em swear and collect us you are. Why you take things as easy as if you were going home to see a visitor, so to speak."

"When shall we get there?" enquired the prisoner.

"Late to-morrow afternoon."

"How very hungry we shall be."

"Lor, miss; we don't do things unhandsomely. You shall have 'em a little bit of dinner presently and a cup of tea when we get to town. We don't want to keep a lady and starve her."

"And one thing more," returned Mrs. Hardy, anxiously. "Let me travel first class. The smell of tobacco and sandwiches always makes me feel faint in the third."

"It's easy to tell, miss, you are an earl's niece," replied the detective, blundering a little over the exact relationship between Alice Tracy and the man she was accused of murdering. "Anyone could tell it with half an eye."

The prisoner smiled. When the train came to she had her own way. The three entered a first class carriage, both the windows were fastened, and Mr. Tyrit and his underling divided the care of them. The prisoner had the whole centre of the carriage to herself.

Her face grew graver as they sped along through the fair Kentish country, lying magnificently in its winter beauty. Perhaps she was contrasting this journey with the one on Sunday night, and missing sorely something she had then and wanted now.

"I am very glad I told Alice to go to Duke. He will tell her just the right thing to do. I wonder what sort of a man she cares for. I'm afraid Duke would not like to hear about him, he has taken so much interest in Alice. Perhaps if it were not for that person in Scotland, she might think seriously of him. It's high time I was married."

And then the widow turned her head the other way, and reflected that though she almost loved Duke, she did not want him to marry.

"His poor wife would be such a slave. She would never dare to say her life was her own,"

which of course was the only reason that Mrs. Hardy rejoiced in her cousin's bachelor state.

Mr. Tyrit was as good as his word. A delicious cup of tea was brought to his captive at Charing Cross, and if she were a little too alarmed at the strangeness of her position to eat any of the bread and butter which accompanied it, the neglect was not occasioned by the quality of that refreshment.

Alone, a fugitive from home and friend, in charge of two detectives, journeying to Scotland to answer for a crime she had never committed—the murder of a man she had never seen—truly it was a strange change for the young mistress of The Grange.

Dora's thoughts flew back to Keston. Had James Carter kept his word? told the story of her antecedents for the anti-side. Mrs. Hardy wondered faintly if she should be an outcast from society when she returned to The Grange. Then she awoke to the realities of her position, and let Mr. Tyrit lead her into a cab to be driven to the King's Cross terminus.

"Remember," she said solemnly to him, "I am innocent. You are taking me to Scotland against my own will. I am unwilling to make any resistance, but yet I tell you I am as innocent of the Aston mystery as you yourselves."

"That will be for the public to consider," replied Tyrit.

So they commenced the dismal night journey to Scotland. Worn out with excitement and fatigue, Dora slept soundly through the small hours. When she awoke a faint glimmer of light could be seen in the east. Both her companions were asleep.

She felt much better in her rest, much more disposed to look on the bright side of things. After all she had never met with Alice Tracy. When once they got to Halifax everyone would acknowledge she was another stranger. They would let her come back then, but should she be in time to help Alice?

She had no warm wraps to comfort her in the long journey and she shivered all the way. A tenderly nurtured woman, very ill-fitted to face the world, James Tyrit's heart misgave him as he looked at her. She might be guilty, but that white throat was too round and graceful for a hangman's rope. It was Thursday afternoon when they reached Halifax, just one fortnight and a day after Alice had quitted it. They took a cab and drove at once to the prison.

"Surely," thought Dorothy, "they will know now."

A carriage with two dashing horses stood before the gates. Alladyn in deep mourning was alighting from it. Dora knew by instinct it was the dowager countess, Sybil Lady Aston. Five minutes more and Mr. Tyrit was leading her into the baillie's presence. He was in a small room where he usually received private visits. A visitor was with him now, the lady Dora had seen from the carriage. She had thrown back her crepe veil and stood with a fierce, eager light in her eyes.

"Here is the prisoner, sir," cried Mr. Tyrit, triumphantly. "It's been hard work to find her."

For one instant deep silence reigned, then a clear, powerful voice cried:

"You have not found her yet. This girl is not Alice Tracy. Speak!" cried the countess, turning to Dorothy. "What does it mean? Who are you?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

NEW FACES.

Howe'er it be it seems to me
"The only noble to be good."
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

THOMSON.

We have forgotten George Arnold, whom we have left asleep in the waiting-room at Victoria Station, where he awoke from his troubled sleep. He went straight to Keston, to receive pretty much the same information as had

greeted the detective. To him the matter seemed simple.

Alice had become aware of her danger and had left The Grange with her friend Mrs. Hardy. An awful fear seized him for the beautiful girl he loved who was a helpless fugitive. Never for an instant did he doubt Alice Tracy's innocence, but a terrible presentiment seized him that this innocence would be proved too late, and his darling have to take her trial for Lord Astor's murder.

Unlike Mr. Tyrit he did not seek out Mr. Carter. He contented himself by writing a few lines full of love and faith, which he addressed to Miss Duncan and begged Hill to forward as soon as possible. This done he returned to London.

His natural course would have been to return to Halifax, but he could not bring his mind to this step. He knew the old saying that in all the world London is the easiest place to be lost in, and he fully believed Alice would come to London, so he put up at the Charing Cross Hotel and spent his days wandering aimlessly about, hoping against hope that chance would throw him in the path of the girl for whose sake he would gladly have sacrificed all.

He had given Alice his address, and implored her to write to him, but as the days wore on and no answer came, a heavy weight fastened itself on his heart, and he despaired of ever finding his golden-haired love.

Poor Alice was not to blame for this silence. The little note would have been duly prized had it reached her, but it never did. Duke Hardy, for prudence's sake, redirected it to Mrs. Gray, the name by which Alice was known at the Sandgate lodgings, and when it came Alice was alone holding Dora's strange letter in her hand and wondering very much what it meant.

She put the epistle from London aside as intended for her friend, and tried hard to understand the hurriedly pencilled lines. She could make nothing of them. It was so unlike her experience of Mrs. Hardy to absent herself in such a manner, but yet the idea that her friend had gone a voluntary captive in her stead never came to her.

All through one weary day and night she waited for Dorothy's return. No news came, no single line. Then Alice forgot that her description was in every public place, and a price was on her head, and resolved to go to London. From Dorothy's well-filled purse, which had been confided to her when she assumed the rôle of a widow, she defrayed their expenses at Sandgate, retaining the apartments for a month and paying the rent for that time.

Then she drove to the railway station and took a ticket for London. She went straight from the terminus to Marmaduke Hardy's chambers; those chambers Dorothy had laughed so merrily about in the days when Alice first came to Keston. A trouble awaited her here; the clerk declared his master engaged.

"I am sure he will see me," returned the girl, with a confidence she was far from feeling. "I have come from Mrs. Hardy, and I must see him."

"Mrs. Hardy of The Grange, Keston?"

"Yes."

That name seemed to act like a magic spell. The clerk retired saying he would tell Mr. Hardy. In another minute he ushered Alice ceremoniously into the barrister's sanctum. Duke Hardy had been standing with his back to the fireplace when she entered, so that they were face to face. He looked strangely disappointed when she raised her veil. Possibly he had expected to see Dorothy herself, though he had no cause to regret the absence of the woman he "detested."

"Pray sit down," he said, courteously. "I must scold you, however rude it seems. When you were safe at Sandgate why didn't you stay there? Mrs. Hardy ought to have had more sense than to risk a journey to London for you."

"She did not," cried Alice, eager to defend her friend. "She went away yesterday, and I



got so frightened I must come here and tell you. In fact, she told me to."

"Went away!" aghast. "What on earth do you mean?"

"She went out to walk on the esplanade in the morning; she said she should be gone half-an-hour, but she never came back, and at dinner-time a boy brought this."

Marmaduke read the hurried lines carefully, then he turned to Alice.

"You saw the boy, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; he was gone before they brought me the note."

"And you really have no idea what has become of Mrs. Hardy?"

"I cannot imagine."

"I must read the riddle for you. By some means the detective who visited The Grange on Monday got wind of your whereabouts. Deceived by the change of character, he believed you were Mrs. Hardy, and she, Dorothea, was the person he was seeking. To my mind it is as plain as daylight."

"But surely Dora would never let them believe she was me."

"Miss Tracy," with an odd smile, "there are some people in the world who will make any sacrifice provided they love the person for whom they make it. Mrs. Hardy is of their number; she can hate intensely, but she can love too."

"And you really think they have taken her to Halsted?"

"I feel pretty well sure of it. Don't look so frightened, Miss Tracy. If the detective were deceived there are plenty of people who are wiser. The moment they get to Halsted Mrs. Hardy will be free."

"But we are not a bit alike," objected Alice.

"You are both fair, and you have the same figure. The detective knew neither of you, and so he fell into the trap Mrs. Hardy spread for him."

"Can they do anything to her?" breathed Alice, tremblingly. "Will they put her in prison or keep her in Scotland?"

[MISTAKEN IDENTITY.]

Duke was silent a minute; his brow darkened. "They would hardly dare," he said, at last. "If they attempted to prove she was an accessory after the fact, I should prove that she never knew your real name until last Saturday."

"What a trouble I have been to her."

Duke did not contradict her.

"I wish you had not come to London. Of course, it was very natural, but what in the world am I to do with you. I can't invite you home, because I live here, and chambers are not the thing for a lady. I really don't know what to do."

Poor Duke looked anxiously round, as though to derive inspiration from looking at his office furniture.

"Shall I go back to Sandgate?" eager to relieve him of what seemed a trouble.

"That would defeat poor Mrs. Hardy's efforts. As soon as they find they have caught the wrong bird they will come back to look for the right one."

Alice looked blankly into the fire, powerless to offer another suggestion. It was getting dark then, and she knew not a creature in London. When she left Mr. Hardy's comfortable office she really had no idea where to go or what to do.

Duke Hardy had never been in such a dilemma before. He would have summoned his deaf old housekeeper, only she was the greatest gossip in the Temple, and Mr. Tyrit might know her failing and benefit by it when he returned to seek his proper prisoner. The brazier rang his bell desparingly; the clerk appeared.

"Shut the door, Ray," was the first command.

But when that was executed Duke was so long before he issued another, that Mr. Ray marvelled.

"Where do you live, Ray?" came at last, in a peremptory tone.

"Milkwood Road, Herne Hill," returned Mr. Ray, wondering much at the question, still more

that it was asked in the presence of the young lady from Mrs. Hardy.

"You are not married, I believe?"

The modest youth blushed hotly, and confessed he was not. He might have added he was only waiting for a rise in his salary to enable him to do so, but Duke's manner did not invite confidence, so his subordinate contented himself with an emphatic denial.

"But you've got a mother or sister or something, I suppose?"

"My sister lives with me, sir."

"Well, I thought as much. Now, Ray, I am going to trust you with a most delicate charge. This young lady," and he indicated Alice with a wave of his hand, "has come up to London to meet my cousin, Mrs. Hardy, and return with her to The Grange. Mrs. Hardy is detained in Scotland for a few days. Can you and your sister receive Miss Grey for a few days?"

Poor Mr. Ray looked bewildered.

"We'll do our best," he observed; "but I'm afraid Milkwood Road would hardly suit the young lady."

"Miss Grey can't go wandering about London by herself," returned Duke, shortly. "I shall be extremely obliged to you if you will receive her as your guest. You had better leave at once, Ray."

"The others are gone, sir. I have not shut up yet, and—"

"I can attend to everything myself; I should like you to go at once."

He followed the clerk out into the farther office and slipped something into his hand, observing it was for expenses, and once more repeating his thanks he returned to Alice.

"I think you will be all right," he said kindly. "It's the best I could do for you. He's a decent young fellow, and I daresay his sister can make you comfortable. Good-bye! As soon as I hear anything of Mrs. Hardy I'll let you know. Remember your name's Miss Grey, and you came from the country to stay with Mrs. Hardy."

(To be Continued.)



[LOVE & DESPAIR.]

VIOLA HAROURT,

OR,

PLAYING WITH HEARTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evander," "Tempting Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

I saw a reptile where the nightshade hangs
Erect his crest and bare his horrid fangs.

The dilemma in which the unfortunate Herbert Conyers had placed himself was the opportunity of Sandford Newton, and one which he did not hesitate to avail himself of. He was by no means sure that Viola would favour his suit. Herbert had acted the part of his rescuer, and when, the next day after her return, he met some friends who informed him that Conyers had broken his engagement with Miss Brady by design to see the dangerous nature of the ground on which he was standing.

His first task was to call upon Viola, who had gone back to Lady Clementina's. A night's rest had calmed her considerably. She was no longer the nervous, hysterical creature she had been. Her eyes were bright, and the colour had come back to her cheeks, for she was among friends once more.

"How do you do, Mr. Newton?" she said, as he entered the drawing-room. "Your father has just been here with the news that Lord Burlington and his brother have gone away to foreign parts in a yacht."

"Indeed!"

"He seems to think that they have heard of my escape, and abandoned the field to us. It is a

move in our favour, and he says we shall win the game."

"I hope so, I am sure," answered Sandford. "Your game is safe enough. I wish I could speak as confidently of mine."

"And what is the nature of yours, pray, may I ask?"

"Simply your love."

"Ah!" she said, looking at him with a merry twinkle of her eye. "I never promised to love you. I only said I would try."

"And have you succeeded?"

"Not as yet."

Sandford Newton heaved a deep sigh, which he intended to convey some faint idea of the intensity of his passion.

"There was a time," he exclaimed, "when I was afraid you never would love me; but now I venture to hope, because the man I was afraid of as a rival, is engaged to another."

It was Viola's turn now to look agitated.

"To whom do you allude?" she asked.

"To whom could I allude, except Dr. Conyers? But perhaps you have not heard. You may not be aware that he is engaged to be married to Miss Libby Brady of Merton Abbey?"

He carefully watched the effect on her of this poisoned arrow.

"Bertie engaged to another!" she cried. "It is false! It cannot be true!"

"I have only to refer you to Miss Brady or to her father. The affair is a common topic of conversation in our circle."

"But he is engaged to me," said Viola. "How can a man engage himself to two girls at the same time?"

Sandford shrugged his shoulders.

"That is more than I can tell," he replied. "Some fellows have peculiar ideas of honour. All I know is that by his conduct he has released you from any fancied tie which he may have imposed upon you. Such things as this have happened before."

Viola's bosom heaved with indignation.

"It is cruel," she said, half inclined to cry, and only resisting the inclination because Sandford

was there. "What right has he to play with my heart in this way?"

"It seems to be a fashionable amusement. By your own admission, a moment ago, you have been playing with mine."

This was to some extent true, and she silently acknowledged the justice of the reproach, but though the perfidy of her lover was made apparent to her she did not smile on his rival.

"It was mean of you to tell me this," she remarked. "I would rather have not known it. I was in a fool's paradise, but I was happy. Now I am miserable."

Sandford fell on one knee before her, placing his hand tranquilly in the region of his heart.

"Be mine!" he cried. "Oh! charming Viola, dream of my soul, let me take his place in your heart? You do not know how dear you are to me."

"Rise, Mr. Newton," she replied. "This is foolish."

"Let me hope. I will be a devoted husband."

"Give me time to think. This is not a time to woo me. I must get over the shock of this great surprise and dreadful disappointment. Indeed, I have a good mind to say that I will never marry."

"Do not say that."

"Men are all deceivers. But Bertie! I would never have believed it. Oh, it's too much!"

Putting her handkerchief to her eyes, she ran out of the room, unable to control herself any longer. Sandford rose from the floor, wiped the dust off his knees, smiled, went to the glass, and running his fingers through his hair, regarded himself complacently.

"Taken it to heart, rather," he muttered. "I thought she was making a fool of me, but let me once get Conyers out of her mind and she may be mine. May be! She shall be. I will win her or die."

With this determination on his lips he quitted

the house, having the approval of his conscience in having aimed a very serious blow at his rival. His next task was to write a letter to Miss Brady couched in the following words:

"DEAR MISS BRADY,—

"It is fitting that you should know why Dr. Conyers has broken off his engagement with you and disregarded his pledged word. He was engaged to Miss Viola Harcourt, who is staying with Lady Clementina Sutton. She disappeared mysteriously from London. Now she has come to light again, and he is once more at her feet. This will explain what was doubtless obscure to you. Let me advise you to insist upon his fulfilling his promise to you, which he will do, if proper pressure is used. I feel deeply sorry for you, and hope that you may have a happy issue out of all your afflictions, and sign myself 'An Anonymous Friend.'

He despatched this epistle through the post, and awaited the course of events.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SILENT INTERVIEW.

THE SILENT INTERVIEW.

The conflict of Herbert Conyers to Miss Brady assailed her with anguish, for she had learnt to love him with all the intensity of virgin affection. It was her first love, and that made it all the harder to endure. Her warm, intense nature. She was all heart and very earnest. What is called flirting was to her an unknown art. She could neither tell nor act a lie.

It was a mystery to her how causes could be as her as Herbert had done. The shock was fearfully sudden, too. She was at a loss to imagine what had caused him to alter his mind in such an extraordinary manner. It was also a mystery to her, and she went about in a bewildered way like one in a dream.

In vain her mother tried to comfort her. It was no satisfaction to her to hear her father say that he would expose and punish him. She loved him still, and did not want him punished. It seemed as if she had nothing left to live for since he had deserted her. Only a few hours before he had been inexpressibly sweet to her, and Herbert's perfidy had changed the pleasant flowery paradise into a howling wilderness, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

Mr. Brady shed tears of sympathy for his daughter in her dire distress, urging her to be patient and have faith in a higher power. She had faith, for she was a good religious girl; but even her faith did not comfort her. She prayed earnestly for help; yet her sobs did not cease, for her heart was broken.

She would look at herself in the glass, and it told her that she was pretty, her form was symmetrical, she was well dressed, and she could see no reason why Herbert should have taken such a dislike to her. While she was wondering why this should have happened, Sandford Newton's anonymous letter reached her and revealed the truth.

She had a rival. That explained all. Her grief at Herbert's rejection of her changed at once to a fierce hatred for the other woman who had supplanted her in his affection, and she conceived a wild desire to see her. To no one did she show the letter, nor did she even hint to her mother what was passing in her mind.

She had the name and address of her rival, and she could not rest until she had called on Miss Harcourt. It would be an embarrassing interview for both of them, and it would be best to get it over quickly. What she was going to say to Viola she did not stop to think. She told herself that all she wanted was to inform her that Herbert had vowed to love her and her only; that he was her affianced husband, and she hoped that this declaration would heap coals of fire on her head.

If she could not have Herbert, she was ready

to go to any length to prevent his becoming the husband of the detested Viola, whom she painted to herself a selfish, designing woman, always spreading nets for those who, in reality, belonged to others.

Of course she had, as we know, formed a very wrong estimate of Viola's character. That was excusable under the circumstances. In her depressed and irritated state of mind, smarting under bitter disappointment and a sense of wrong, she was, perhaps, justified in coming to such a conclusion and thinking that the woman who had stolen her lover was both bold and false.

Without giving the slightest intimation to her mother of her intention, she dressed hurriedly and went up to town, seeking the mansion in which Lady Clementina resided. Its grand appearance inflamed her all the more, for it spoke volumes of wealth and luxury.

Viola was evidently rich. She could have chosen a husband out of a thousand, and in Libby Brady's mind there was less excuse for her in taking away the man she had selected out of her limited circle of acquaintance.

When she was shown into a richly-furnished apartment by a footman in gorgeous livery, her eyes rested curiously on the articles of vest, the valuable paintings, and the handkerchief and accessories of a drawing-room, belonging to one of the *élites* de la *société* of society, and it made her hate Viola all the more, while she could not help despising Herbert. She thought he had left her to marry another woman, and that his weak soul had been led by the glories of wealth and unlimited wealth.

After waiting impatiently for Libby to arrive, Viola entered the room dressed in a morning wrapper of light blue. She was pale, her face overshadowed with the cast of sleep; but she was undeniably very beautiful, which was more than Libby had to admit with a pang. Her own prettiness was cast into the shade by the striking loveliness of her rival, who advanced towards her with an easy grace.

"You wish to see me," exclaimed Viola. "I do not know you, but if you will state your business, I shall be glad to hear in what way I can be of any use to you."

She spoke in a low, sweet voice which was inexpressibly charming, and even Libby, angry and prejudiced as she was, could not help being impressed with it.

"Miss Harcourt," replied Libby, "I am Miss Brady, and up to yesterday I was the affianced wife of Mr. Conyers, but I am informed that he broke off his engagement with me in order that he might marry you. Now you know who I am and why I am here."

A red flush suffused Viola's face and neck. She looked steadily at Libby, who played restlessly with the fringe of her parasol.

"Well," she ejaculated, "is that all?"

"No, it is not all," replied Libby Brady. "For months Herbert has been an inmate of our house and has made love to me."

She hesitated, and seemed at a loss for words, as if the calmness of her rival disconcerted her.

"Go on, please," said Viola.

"I ask you to give him up," exclaimed Libby. "He is mine, and—*and* you are acting unfairly in taking him away from me. I love him—oh! I love him so! Speak! Will you not say something? Have you no pity? Are you cold and heartless as a stone? No, no, I will not believe it! You have a beautiful face, and you must have a good heart. Perhaps you did not know of his engagement to me. It is all a mistake on your part. Say, if it is not so, Miss Harcourt?"

A sad smile came over Viola's countenance. She did not betray any emotion. Her late sufferings and the discovery of Herbert's treachery had made a woman of her. She was no longer a trusting, confiding girl. Trouble had made her strong and self-reliant. She had been through the fire, and the furnace heat had purified her.

"My poor girl," she said, "I, too, have loved, for Herbert Conyers was mine before he became yours. The same vows that he poured into your willing ears he breathed to me. Men's

oaths are traced in water. For a woman to build her happiness on what a man says is like erecting a house on the sand of the seashore, for when the storms come and the winds blow it will fall to pieces like a house of cards. I give you Herbert; and renounce all claim to him."

At this sublime sacrifice Libby Brady was struck with admiration. She could at first scarcely believe the evidence of her senses. To give up Herbert seemed the height of magnanimity. She could not have done it in favor of her rival.

Her eyes sparkled with delight. She once more saw her idol at her feet. She pictured him asking for forgiveness, and after gently chiding him, she fully intended to extend to him a full pardon and take him to her arms and kiss him more.

"Thank you, thank you!" she cried, taking Viola's hand and kissing it to her lips. "You have saved my life. If I have said anything base or unkind, or if I have exceeded the bounds of modesty in coming here, apologize to my feelings. I was suffering from a sense of wrong. I thought you had taken him from me."

"Hush! Do not mention him any more," exclaimed Viola. "I am not very strong, and cannot bear his name. You are not the only one who has undergone pain. He has cost me a struggle, but I am prouder than you, my dear, and I consider that Herbert Conyers is not worth another thought from me, if he could forgive me quietly."

"I hope you may be happy," replied Libby. "I truly. Believe me, I will pray for you every night, indeed I will. Good-bye, Miss Harcourt. I leave these hands."

They shook hands, and Libby left the room, glad that the distressing interview was over, and fearing that it ought not to be prolonged. Alone once more, Viola sank on a lounge, and clasping her hands together, looked like a statue of despair.

"May her prayers be heard," she murmured, while the tears rushed to her eyes in blinding floods. "What have I done?"

"Yes, what bad *she* done! In a few weeks she had wrecked her happiness for ever. Her pride had ordered her to relinquish Herbert. The head had triumphed over the heart. She had given him to another, but in so doing she had aimed a blow at her peace of mind from which she would never recover.

With the contradiction of a woman's nature she was sorry she had done so, now that Libby Brady was gone, yet the act was irrevocable. Of her own free will Herbert was lost to her for all time, and could be no more to her than if he had never been born."

His love would make the paradise of another; his handsome face would be for Libby to gaze at; his kisses would be Libby's, and the proud name of wife would belong to the little war doll-like beauty who had just quitted the room. While she was weighing these things in her mind the servant announced Mr. Conyers. Viola started violently. Her colour went and came; her bosom heaved heavily; a choking sensation was in her throat. It was with difficulty she was able to speak. Her brain felt dizzy, for all the blood left her heart.

"Tell him I cannot see him," she exclaimed. "Yet stay. This once—yes, once more only. Let him come up."

The domestic bowed and retired. Presently Herbert came bounding up the stairs with all the eagerness of an impatient lover. He hastened to her side; he took her hand, which was icy cold; and regarded her with surprise, for there was nothing in her manner at all responsive.

"What, Libby—I mean Viola," he said, in confusion, "are you in tears?"

She wiped her eyes and laughed hollowly as she looked at him.

"Oh, no; you are mistaken," she answered. "Why should I cry? It is well though that you mentioned that girl's name. She has just been here."

"Miss Brady been here?" asked Herbert, staggering like a tipsy man and catching hold of the back of a chair to steady himself.

"Yes. Is there anything extraordinary in that?"

He began to fear now. There was something so strange, unnatural and artificial in her manner that he could see something very grave had occurred. Had he between two stools fallen to the ground? It looked very much like it.

"Viola, what does this mean?" he demanded.

"It means, Mr. Conyers, that you have perjured yourself!" replied Viola, with dignity. "Perhaps you think it very manly to trifling with the affections of two girls. You will say foppishly that Jove laughs at the broken vows of lovers, or try to turn off the matter with some quip or jest, but I can assure you that I have no wish to interfere with your projected union with Miss Brady."

"Did you tell her that?" he asked, in a quipulchal tone.

"I did most certainly. She came to demand you at my hands, and I gave you up as easily as a child does a worthless toy of which it has grown tired."

"Do you no longer love me?"

"That is a question you have no right to ask, and one which I shall not answer. All I can say is that you are perfectly free. I release you from your promise. Go and redeem your manhood by marrying your pretty doll. Henceforth our paths in life are separate. We may meet in the gay and giddy throng of the world, but we shall meet as strangers."

He sat down and looked puzzled, for this was what he had not expected.

"You discard me as you would an old glove," said he; "you have no right to treat me like this. I will have nothing to do with Miss Brady; it is you that I love, and you that I have."

"In that case you are cherishing a hopeless passion, and I warn you that you are pursuing a phantom. Better take what happiness is offered you, as I have too much respect ever to notice you again. Do you think that I could waste any sympathy or affection over a man who in my absence made the same love to another woman as he had done to me?"

Herbert Conyers was deeply agitated. He saw now that it was too late how dear she was to him. People rarely appreciate anything until they have lost it. If he could have recalled the past and undone his fatal error, he would have given worlds, were they his to give.

"Viola," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "I thought you were dead. Before you disappeared, I heard from Sandford Newton that you were engaged to him. Can you wonder that I made love to Miss Brady?"

"Yea. The heart that has once truly loved, is truly loves on to the end."

"Can you not look over my fault? See, on my knees I ask it!"

He threw himself at her feet as he spoke and looked up piteously in his face, but he met no answer favourable to his wishes there. She had saved herself for this ordeal, and was determined to be strong, even if she broke her heart in the endeavour.

"I cannot; it is too late! No, Herbert, I will accept no heart that has beaten for another. The man who loves me must love me only."

"I do love you and you alone," he cried, passionately. "Be merciful; do not wreck my life and your own too, for though you speak so cruelly, I am sure you care a little for me. My form will ever rise over the ashes of the love you think dead."

"That is very poetical, but it does not affect my determination in the least," replied Viola. "Go, Bertie, to your Libby, and my last prayer will be that you may be happy with her."

Strong man as he was, he shed tears and his powerful frame was broken with sobs, so that this was no lovers' quarrel which can be made up through the medium of a little weeping and a few kisses. Viola was unable to bear any more, so she prudently brought the interview to a close by gliding softly to the door,

and when he again looked up he was alone—alone in his great agony and his wild despair. For a moment he looked around him like one bewildered, then he took his hat and walked as one in a dream from the house which contained all that was dear to him on earth.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MARCH OF EVENTS.

LUC.: "Tranquill, I saw her coral lips to move, and with her breath she did perfume the air. Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her."

THE.: "Nay then 'tis time to stir her from her trance."

VIOLA was firm in her determination. She resolutely refused to see Herbert Conyers though he called several times, and when he sent her letters she returned them unopened. This conduct at first hurt him deeply, but afterwards he felt piqued and determined to show her that he could be as proud as she.

He called on Mr. Brady and made an apology to that gentleman the natural result being that he was forgiven and asked to visit the house on the old terms. In less than a week he had made his peace with Libby Brady, who received him with open arms. She asked no questions, being quite content to have him at her feet once more.

His father was an old friend of Mr. Brady's and urged him strongly to marry Libby, which he did, the marriage being celebrated at Merton Abbey with great pomp and ceremony. After the wedding they started for the Continent, Herbert being well supplied with money and stifling his recollections of the past. Herbert tried very hard to love his wife.

This, however, he found to be impossible. He could respect and appreciate her, but he could not love her as he had done Viola, and when it was too late he found he had made another mistake. He became morose and gloomy. Wash his life to be all mistakes?

In frequenting haunts of pleasure and gambling resorts he tried to find relief from his thoughts, but though Libby was the perfection of love and kindness, he could not forget Viola. The kinder Libby was, the more her caresses failed upon him, and after six weeks of marriage he wished he was free again.

Occasionally notices appeared in the society papers to the effect that Dr. Conyers had won or lost a large sum of money at a gaming table; that he had ridden a steeplechase or climbed an alp. He seemed to be in constant search of excitement, and to set no value on life.

Sandford Newton was delighted at the success of his plans. He waited some time before he renewed his suit with Viola, giving her time, as he phrased it, to forget her old love. Events marched quickly. The lawsuit against Lord Tarlington was decided in Viola's favour. It made some sensation in the circles in which she moved.

Lord Tarlington was held to be a villain, and Dr. Newton was regarded as little better when the facts were published. The doctor's practice fell off. He was looked coldly upon and retired from practice. He had triumphed over his enemy and revenged the blow which had been given to his son, but his loss of prestige preyed upon his mind, and he died suddenly.

Sandford Newton came into all his large fortune, the accumulation of years, and it must be confessed that his eyes were dry at his father's funeral. Lord Tarlington and his brother, the Honourable Fitzharding Sutton, had taken away with them all the money they could lay their hands on, and though unable to return to England, lived comfortably on the Continent, where so many English people of shady reputations manage to exist out of sight of their countrymen.

Owing to the decision of the law-courts in her favour, Viola was now the Honourable Miss Sutton, with a handsome fortune, entirely independent of Lady Clementina, but she continued to reside with her and steadily rejected all the offers that were made to her.

These, as may be imagined, were not a few, for when beauty and wealth are combined in the person of a woman there will be no lack of suitors for her hand. She buried her secret deep down in her breast, and told Lady Clementina that she should never marry.

Her ladyship, who was much attached to her, did not urge her to break this resolution, for she did not want to lose her. It might have been owing to the way in which she brooded over her lost love, or the fatigues of the London season, but a settled melancholy took possession of her, and the physician advised change of air and scene.

It was the beginning of autumn and London was emptying fast. Sandford heard of her determination to travel and thought that the time had come to urge his claim to her hand and heart. Accordingly he paid her a visit. He thought that he only had to come to see, to conquer, like Caesar after crossing the Rubicon.

Lady Clementina Sutton had a beautiful country house in the vicinity of Coombe Wood, near Kingston, where she gave magnificent parties. She was temporarily residing there, when Sandford called to offer himself to Viola. A few friends, including a peer of the realm, some officers in the Guards, and half a dozen ladies, were lunching at the Lodge, and playing tennis on the lawn when he drove up, elegantly dressed and resplendent in diamonds, a heavy watch-chain and three big lockets adorning his waistcoat. Money was no object to him now, and he prided himself on being what he called the best dressed man in London, driving the best horses, playing higher than anyone else at the clubs, and smoking the most expensive cigars.

Lady Clementina and Viola received him kindly. He was surprised to see that Viola was much thinner, and that she had lost all the animation which formerly characterized her, going about in a listless manner, though she brightened up a little at seeing him.

The fact was that he appeared to be a link between the present and the past. From him she thought that she might gain some news of Herbert, who was constantly in her thoughts. After partaking of some claret cup, Sandford offered his arm to Viola, asking her to show him the grounds, to which he was a stranger.

"I am glad you don't play lawn tennis," he said, "it is awfully slow. I like talking to you so much better, don't you?"

"Really," replied Viola, "I scarcely know what I like and what I don't like. Nothing seems to give me pleasure."

"Well, that is a nice state of mind to be in. It is fashionable to be indifferent to the world and its fascinations."

"Is it?" she asked, languidly. They wandered into a yew path on each side of which was a tall hedge of laurels, leaving the merry party on the lawn on the left. Voices and laughter reached them occasionally, growing fainter as they penetrated further into the spacious grounds.

"Lord Tarlington was held to be a villain, and Dr. Newton was regarded as little better when the facts were published. The doctor's practice fell off. He was looked coldly upon and retired from practice. He had triumphed over his enemy and revenged the blow which had been given to his son, but his loss of prestige preyed upon his mind, and he died suddenly."

He hesitated and looked at her with, what he thought was, a loving glance.

"Except what, Mr. Newton?" inquired Viola.

"Why—a—love, you know. We ought to get married. You must be aware that I have always admired you above any member of your charming sex."

"It is very kind of you, I'm sure."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"If you want me to be more explicit," replied Viola, "I will say that however much I may be flattered by your preference, Mr. Newton, I cannot accept you."

"Won't have me!" cried Sandford, with a crestfallen air.

"I shall never marry," Viola replied, quietly.

"But look here, I can't understand this," said Sandford. "I thought that when that fellow Conyers was out of the way the thing was as good as settled."

"Then permit me to say you thought wrongly."

"Of course, I did not press the matter because of my father's death. The custom of society requires that a certain time shall elapse after a father's decease before a man can marry, but the time has come now, and I ask you to be mine."

"I am very sorry, but I must refuse," Viola exclaimed.

Sandford Newton stood still, and looked at her steadfastly.

"Not have me!" he cried.

"I have already said I cannot. Shall I supplement that declaration by I will not?"

"Never heard such a thing in my life! Not have me! Why, half the girls in London are after me. 'Pon my word, I'm completely upset, knocked off my perch like a bird with a stone! Do you know I am rich?"

"So am I."

"But are you in earnest, Viola—I mean, Miss Sutton? Think what my father and I did for you. If it had not been for us, you might have been exercising the light fantastic at the Vesuvian; doing the ballet, you know."

"I am perfectly well aware of all that," answered Viola, "and I frankly acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude I owe you, though you had your own ends to serve in the matter. Still, I am your debtor in that respect."

Sandford Newton bit his lips with vexation, as he drew from his pocket a case containing a handsome diamond and emerald set.

"I bought that for you," he said. "It cost five thousand pounds; but I will give it to the first nice girl I meet, and I'll be hanged if I don't marry her out of spite!"

Viola smiled at his impetuosity.

"You can do as you like with your own," she replied.

"All right. I understand. You are laughing at me. I can see that you are a cold-hearted flirt, who likes to lead men on and play with their hearts as a cat does with a mouse."

"You have no right to say that."

"But I do say it."

"If you only stay here to insult me, Mr. Newton, I must beg of you to go," she said, with dignity.

"Oh, I can do that. Good-bye! I have only one thing to ask of you. Do not tell anybody of this scene. A man hates to be laughed at, and it is not nice for a fellow's friends to know that he has been refused by the object of his adoration."

"Not one word shall pass from my lips, I assure you."

He gave her a hasty nod, and disappeared up the path. Soon afterwards his carriage was heard travelling at a rapid rate over the gravelled road, until the sound of the wheels were lost in the distance.

"Another lover gone," sighed Viola. "Ah, me! how many hearts am I destined to break? Not that poor Sandford is likely to break his, for he is not that kind of a man."

After a pause she slowly walked to the lawn, and regarded the guests, who were far from suspecting the nature of the drama which had been enacted in the shrubbery.

"Oh, Herbert!" she added, as she wiped away a tear, "you have much to answer for."

(To be Continued.)

Mr. Cross will want thirty-one millions to buy out the water-companies. The date of the purchase will be July 1, and by October the matter will pass into the hands of the Trust entirely. The next thing will be gas, and then some method of clearing the atmosphere. Thus the Government will purvey fine air and water.

TWICE REJECTED; OR,

THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LEILA LORAIN was gradually recovering from the fatigues and anxieties of the long and arduous cases that she had attended so zealously and so tenderly. All the most trying part of her earliest life had been revived by the contact with Lord Dunallan and Lord Mayfield and the unfortunate Lady Agatha.

Digby and his unfortunate bride, Egbert Dunallan and his faults and virtues, his mistaken pride, and his nobler sense of the right and the beautiful, had vanished like a dream. They were gone, and she was left to her monotonous toil, which could scarcely again be interrupted either for pain or pleasure by such startling and unusual memories of the past, such revenants, so to speak, from her past life.

The very morning after the unfortunate Hugo's death she had announced to the superior that she felt perfectly equal to any duties that might be required of her at the moment, and anxious to occupy her mind and her body, with as little delay as possible, so far as the next opportunity for her services occur in the establishment.

An hour or two after that announcement she was sitting, as too often was her temptation to do, in one of the dreary reveries which make the present as a void and blank, when the door opened and Geoffrey Sabine approached, and gravely extended his hand as she involuntarily sprang forward to meet him.

But her first exclamation of pleasure, her first eager joy at the sight was quickly chilled by the coldness of his manner, which was far more reserved and distant than she had ever yet experienced from him.

"Sit down, Miss Loraine," he said; "you look very delicate and fragile, I grieve to see. I will not keep you long—indeed, I am here to request you to trust yourself to my escort and guidance for a little time. Will you do so?"

"Oh, yes; indeed—indeed, I will," said the girl, frankly, her sweet face flushing with eager and trustful emotion. "You have always been so good a friend. How can I doubt you?"

It was very difficult for the young man to resist the temptation of that confiding speaker's look and the tone of the expressive voice, but he answered in the same measured tone:

"Thank you very much. I have the permission of the superior for your absence, so if you will prepare we will lose no time in starting on our expedition."

She quickly obeyed with the docile submission she always showed to Geoffrey Sabine's directions, and in a few moments she was ready to start on the mysterious errand. But little passed between them for some part of the way, but as they came nearer to their destination Geoffrey suddenly broke silence.

"Leila," he said, "can you bear suspense; can you bear the hope, the prospect of a great good and yet not be unduly excited to hope—I mean can you endure suspense and doubt which will in all probability end well and prosperously?"

She shook her head rather sadly.

"I cannot imagine any very great good—I mean anything that would make my happiness very exciting," she said, sadly. "I fancy that all which could once have given me happiness is out of all question now, or would be valueless if I obtained it. You see I have very early exhausted life," she added, with a wan smile that made him read yet more curiously the speaker's features.

"That is simply the effect of your past

troubles at so early an age," he said, calmly. "There is a bright future before you, I hope and believe, though I may never see your happiness, but only imagine it and hear of it at a distance."

Leila was almost alarmed, even for the sanity of her companion, and still more for the idea which was presented to her mind of losing sight of the only friend she trusted in the world.

"What do—what can you mean?" she said. "Are you so cruel, or do you think me so ungrateful that you want to give me up altogether. Indeed—indeed, I should be so very grieved; you must not tell me that," she said, in a soft, sweet tone.

He gave a half involuntary glance of tenderness at the beautiful girl. It was more than human nature—that man's nature could stand to hear such words and see such looks in one he fondly loved.

"Thank you, you are kind, very kind," he said, in a constrained tone. "It is but fair to give you some idea of what is before you," he went on. "The truth is, Miss Loraine, that I believe you to be the heiress of a noble name and noble fortune, and if it can be proved to the satisfaction of others, as much as myself, I have no fear that it will shortly be yours. But it is impossible to ensure it, and if that so happens that you were to fail after I had held out such hopes and prospects before you, it might be such a blow to you that you would hate me for my temerity, and sink back in depression and disappointment."

"No, no, no! indeed you are wrong. I should not be much elated, and still less should I be upset or grieved to return to my present life. Perhaps I am far happier as I am," she replied, with a truthful gravity in her mien that proved the sincerity of her words.

"Yet you have to work. You are subject to every possible hardship and privation," he said, gently.

"Perhaps; but I am happier so. I must have some occupation—some compensation for all that has been taken from me. And I find it only in work—hard, constant, engrossing work," she added, with feverish eagerness.

"Then you are not happy; that is a proof of it. The young and the happy love to muse over their own thoughts and fancies. It is only the sad and disappointed who would smother up their grief under a press of overwhelming occupation," returned the young lawyer, anxiously watching the girl's face as he spoke.

"I have had many trials, and you know it; I have been suddenly cast down from all I believed to be mine," she said, quickly. "Still, in some respects I do not regret what I lost."

His eyes glittered eagerly. Could it be that it was her treacherous lover she did not regret to lose? Was there some other love grown up in her true heart that told her she had mistaken its beating in her early youth. Geoffrey Sabine hastily crushed back the feverish thought and hastened to answer, while yet ignoring the girl's innocent confession:

"I hope and believe all that can be repaired will soon be yours," he said, calmly; "and see we are now at the house we are bound for. Leila, be true and brave, and all will end as it should for you—the injured and the innocent one."

In a few moments they entered Mrs. Somers' room.

"Mrs. Somers," he said, calmly, "I have brought you the real claimant to the title and estates of Spinola, the twin sister of the dead infant, for whom you passed off your unfortunate grandson. If you are wise; if you are penitent, you will at once receive and acknowledge her, and do your utmost to restore her to her rights. It is the only atonement you can make for the past. Leila, go to this stricken woman and bid her tell you if I am not speaking truth."

The young girl timidly advanced to the side of the couch. It was a singular contrast—was the harsh, large features of the woman, who lay there on the very eve of another world, her haggard face marked with the lines that both

time and care and remorse had planted in her worn face, and the fair, fresh, innocent face of the young creature just entering into life; and only the victim of others errors and intrigues, and not her own. Yet it was rather on the first words than the expression of the faces that Geoffrey Sabine hung in breathless interest. Leila was the first to speak.

"Is it so? Can this be true? Oh, if it is, may Heaven pardon you, as I do! Only for your own sake rather than mine confess the real truth, whether for good or evil," she uttered, softly and low in the woman's ear.

"Then you would forgive; you would not resent it if it were so," said the woman, hoarsely. "I would from my very heart," said Leila, calmly. "Perhaps it is better that it should be so; better that I should have had this bitter experience of life than been—deceived," she continued, in a sad, thoughtful tone.

Mrs. Somers still remained silent, but Geoffrey, who watched at a little distance the scene, could see plainly the struggle between truth and falsehood, proud annoyance and the penitence that should wait on the most hardened of dying sinners.

"Why should you think it? What put it in your head?" she asked, as Leila calmly awaited her next utterance.

"I had no—not the most distant idea of such a thing till this moment," said Leila. "All that Mr. Sabine told me as we were entering your house was that he believed he had found a clue to my birth. That was all that he ever hinted to me," she continued, with an unmistakable truth in her tone.

"Yet you are not fluttered, agitated, overcome with exultation. How is that? Do you not believe it?" asked the woman.

"Yes, I do; Mr. Sabine says so," was the reply.

Geoffrey's heart glowed with pleasure. At least, he possessed her esteem if not her heart.

"And do you not care for it, then, if it can be obtained?" was the next question.

"I do not know. It would all be so strange—I am among strangers; it might be desolate, more so than to work, unless I have those I love near me," replied the girl, sadly.

"You are a true and noble creature, and richly deserve the possessions which will be yours," was the old woman's reply, while tears came in her aged eyes. "And you shall have it at any cost, any degradation to myself—ay, and what matters it, when my Hugo is gone?" she went on, with a burst of irrepressible though coarse emotion in her hysterical sobs.

Leila soothed her gently; in spite of the natural horror that she could not but feel for the woman's crime, she could not but bestow some pity on the grief of one so aged and so stricken.

"Tell me all; tell me why it was that you committed the fraud. As to the proofs, they must be collected and arranged elsewhere, but I would like to hear your own confession from your own lips," said Geoffrey, firmly.

And the tale of sin and temptation was soon told. And Leila promised Mrs. Somers her forgiveness as she hoped to be forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"And this is my heiress, the child of my unfortunate cousin?" exclaimed the Marchese di Spinola, when, after due consideration of the claims of Leila, she was brought before the Italian noble by the advocate who had so strenuously enforced and vindicated her claims to the birthright of which she had so long been in ignorance. "She is charming, and although you are a girl, ma belle, you can do me far more service, and you can advance the desires I have at heart far more effectually by a good marriage, and I believe I have one ready for you—one that will advance not only your own rank and fortune, but bring fresh lustre on our name. Fair and young and well dowered, you can surely command any rank under that of a royal prince."

The lovely face of the fair heiress was suffused

with a warm but not altogether flattered blush as she listened.

"It would be in vain," she said, "utterly in vain. I could never dream of such a marriage. I never wish for it. I will stay with you and make you happy, my dear kinsman," she added, in a soft voice that might have melted the hardest heart of those connected with her in blood or in regard.

The marchese shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, that is your English notions. We arrange quite differently here. Our maidens are guided entirely by our will; but of course it is rather your misfortune than your fault, and I must have patience while we make all the necessary arrangements for you. Before those are completed you will have come to your senses and be prepared to obey in all docility."

It was hard to say no, hard to refuse and risk offending the only kinsman she possessed in the world, and one who really believed that what he proposed was not only correct but most conducive to her happiness. Her gentle silence pacified and perhaps deceived in a measure the marchese.

"I think it will be better for me to conclude the remaining business with that young lawyer, who has certainly done us good service in all respects. There are one or two papers still to be signed. I should like to give him a liberal consideration for his zeal. I will make an appointment for the morning, and you will be present and bid him a courteous adieu," he said, with an air of satisfaction.

Leila thankfully retired without any further betrayal of her sentiments. Though she was restored to all and more than all the luxuries and the rank of her early years, she was not happy. She lacked love, sympathy, and the familiar feeling of home and friends. It was but a barren elevation, and in an atmosphere as cold as the marble with which the saloons were enriched.

"I will, I must see Geoffrey. I cannot part from him thus," she thought, sadly. "I would give up all—all rather than be so ungrateful." She had scarcely risen and completed her toilette on the following morning when the servant entered to announce the arrival of "Signor Geoffrey Sabine," and to add that the marchese was too indisposed to quit his couch, and would the signorina be good enough to arrange everything that remained to be settled before the signor departed?

Leila's heart beat high when she entered the stately saloon where Geoffrey Sabine awaited her. He bowed with courteous politeness as she came in, and placed a chair for her at a respectful distance from that he chose for himself. The girl looked reproachfully at him, and half extended her hand.

"Are you offended with me? How have I displeased you, my truest friend?" she said, pleadingly.

"Pardon me, signorina, but I am only the lawyer now, not a friend," he said, firmly. "Our ranks in life are too far apart."

"You did not think so when I was the poor nurse, the companion of the Nameless and the Rejected One," she exclaimed, eagerly. "I was a hunted, timid nurse, your inferior in actual rank then, while as to all else you must always be my superior. Do not, do not be so unkind. It will break my heart. How can I be happy when all is so cold and so distant? What do you think of me, or do you not care for me at all? Has it only been from pity?" she added, sadly.

"Listen to me, Leila," he replied, gently. "Your plain duty is to conform to the station in which you were born, and which you must fill to the utmost of your power. I have, thank Heaven, been instrumental in saving you from the humiliation to which you have been so long subjected, and Fate is no longer unjust and cruel to you. It will ever be a sweet reflection to me, and I shall ever find the truest happiness in hearing of yours, my—I mean my dear, noble Leila."

Leila looked at him eagerly. Did her eyes and ears deceive her, or were there moistening tears in his eyes and a tremulous quivering in

voice that betrayed but too plainly the secret of his feelings? It were sweet to believe it, and sweeter still to see the noble self-denial that restrained the indulgence of the passionate emotion which he could so ill restrain. She hesitated but a moment, lest it should indeed be unmaidenly and wrong what she was about to do, and then she gave herself up to the warm, generous impulses of her woman's heart.

"Geoffrey!" she exclaimed, rising from her seat and springing towards him as he turned his attention to the packet of papers he extracted from a small valise. "You have worked my misery if you leave me thus. I cannot endure it. You told me that you loved me when I was poor and unknown. Is it a crime to be rich and noble, and to be punished by losing all I value on earth?"

A bright flush suffused his face as he heard the words, and he involuntarily dropped the papers he held as if he were longing to clasp her in his arms. Then he remembered himself and drew back from her very contact.

"And then you set the example, Leila. You refused to listen to me because you fancied that you were not my equal. Why should I be less noble than you and less sacrificing to duty?"

"Oh, that was different, all different," she replied, quickly. "Had it been then I should have brought disgrace and suspicion on you that might have most seriously injured you through your whole life. I owe all to you; you are a gentleman in everything. I will never, never love—never marry anyone else but you. Are you determined to make me wretched for life? And I to live without friends and love and joy because you do not love me, Geoffrey?"

He turned and clasped her in his arms. It was simply irresistible. Who could listen to such pleading unmoved from the sweetest and the dearest lips on earth?

"Leila, Leila, you unman, you conquer me," he exclaimed, passionately. "Oh, be merciful, be noble! Leave me, at least, my self-esteem, my honour."

"And let me preserve my woman's place, at least," she said, with ever playful accents, for it was so sweet, so inspiring, to feel that she had such power over that noble nature that she could really lean on him, trust in him for life, and never be alone and desolate more. "It is for you to ask me now, Geoffrey, to save me the forward boldness of offering myself to you unasked—shall I say repulsed?"

A passionate kiss sealed the pretty lips that uttered such treason, and Leila knew full well that her accusations needed no other rebutting.

"You have conquered, darling Leila," he said, after a brief space, during which he had striven to collect his thoughts and senses; "but still, you would not believe that I loved you so well if I did not love honour more. If you are really certain of your own heart, and that after full test and experience you can never be happy with one of your own station, who would be able to place you in the position to which you are fitted, I will move every power to win you and to make you happy. But that must be fully proved, my Leila, for my sake as well as for yours."

"What do you mean? What would you have me do?" she asked, fearfully, as if some terrible ordeal was before her. "I would wish to please you in all things, Geoffrey, but do not ask any Quixotic impossibilities."

"It is nothing so very terrible if you are sure of yourself, dearest," he replied. "I will give you a year to fully comprehend and appreciate your new position, and all its luxuries, temptations, and fashions, without binding you in the very least to the confession you have just now so generously made. And I, in the meantime, will strive to the very utmost to render myself worthy of my treasure. It will be a prize that might well make a man conquer fate and fortune itself."

Leila listened with downcast eyes and changing colour to Geoffrey's words. She was too noble-hearted herself not to fully appreciate the delicacy and honour that was dictating the self-denial of her lover, and there was at least some consolation in having the opportunity of

proving the reality and perseverance of her love and trust in him.

"It is needless," she said, "but it shall be as you wish, dear Geoffrey, and I will begin my life of obedience before the time. But if you are fickle, if you change, then poor Leila must go into a nunnery, for she will find few friends in this cold region."

"And if you are pressed by suitors—if the marchioness arranges a marriage for you—what then?" he asked, half playfully, half-sadly.

"Then I will threaten the same proceeding," she said. "At any rate, they cannot force me to be married, and if they shut me up I shall not much care till our stipulated year and day is over, dear Geoffrey, and you come for your true bride."

A mute caress sealed the compact, and then the lovers proceeded to the more practical part of the business. The papers were discussed and signed, and witnessed by the steward of the mansion, and then Geoffrey prepared to take his leave.

"Adieu, my heart's treasure, my beloved one," he whispered. "Whatever you may hear, be assured of my truth and love. I shall not attempt to come near you again to remind you of my presence. It will be a year of probation that will be richly repaid by the future happiness it will bring, or, if not, by pangs of conscience."

Leila shed no tears. She was thinking of him she loved, and she nerve'd herself to fulfil well and nobly the duties that awaited her in her new and untried sphere.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

THE PEARL OF THE OCEAN; OR, THE AVENGERS FOILED.

CHAPTER V.

PEARL pressed a sleepless pillow that night. She felt oppressed by some dire foreboding of coming evil. And yet, she asked herself, what could come to her which would give her an additional pang?

Looking into her heart, and reading the dreadful secret hidden there, she felt that fate had done its worst. And still she was troubled. She had been lured to the Glen by a note from Bett Morgan—Bett Morgan whom she was obliged to obey—and instead of the woman as she had expected, she found Colonel Rudolph.

He explained that he had met Bett on passing near The Roost that afternoon, and that she had commissioned him to meet Pearl and inform her that it was impossible for her to come that night.

Rudolph had been respectful enough, though his manner was tender, and he had put his arm around her waist when he had said good-night. And thinking it over Pearl shuddered, as she always did at the sight of him. She rose pale and unrefreshed. Jerry glanced at her suspiciously as she entered the breakfast-room.

"What ails you, Miss Pearl?" he asked, bluntly.

"Nothing, Jerry. Nothing ails me."

"Didn't yo never larn the cattywampus, Miss Pearl? That teases folks that a Mr. Ananias and somebody by the name of Sophia, or something like it, was struck dead for lying. Hain't you afeard?"

"No, Jerry," in the same hopelessly indifferent tone, that went to the honest fellow's heart, so nearly did it interpret to him how miserable she was.

"You hain't bilious, be ye? 'Cause, if you are, I've got some bitters down at the shop that'll set ye all right in a twinkling. Grandest

things to give ye an appetite that ever was. Only two shillings a bottle, and you can have 'em for nothing."

"Thank you, Jerry. I do not need any medicine."

"Oh, you don't. Well, if I was you, I'd do something. I'd scold that old witch that has made you so unhappy. And I vow to man, if I'd mitten the lieutenant, I'd have him back again and marry him afore the sun set. For it's my opinion that there's a league against you, and the old beldame and Colonel Rudolph have got their heads together in it. And they're both pulling in the same direction you may bet your eyes."

"You must be mistaken, Jerry. Indeed, I know that you are."

"I won't dispute your word, 'cause it wouldn't be polite, but I'm jest as sarting of it as I am that I've got a nose."

Pearl gave little heed to Jerry's words. The idea of connecting Rudolph, the handsome, wealthy gentleman, with Bett Morgan, seemed to her simply ridiculous. It was nearly noon when the rapid clatter of horses' hoofs sounded on the gravel in front of the Noyes' cottage.

Pearl, on looking out, perceived Rob Morgan dismounting from Nero. His face was pale, his manner hurried, and as he came rapidly up the walk Pearl, rightly conjecturing that his business was with her, went out to meet him. He came to the point at once, without stopping to reply to her salutation.

"There is peril to the man you love," he said, hoarsely; "peril from which only you can rescue him, because you alone have any influence over him."

"I do not understand you. Speak plainly."

"Last night Max Livingstone and Albert Rudolph met at the Wanderer's Home, and words passed between them—no matter on what subject—and to-day they are to meet at Wizard's Point."

"To meet? For what purpose?"

"For the purpose of murdering each other?" said the hunchback, with energy, "but they style their meeting an affair of honour."

"An affair of honour? Good heavens! You do not mean a duel?"

"You have said it."

"A duel! Max fight a duel! I must go instantly. But how am I to get there in time?"

"I have brought you Nero. He is swift and strong. Mount, and ride like the wind! There is yet an hour to the time, and it is eight miles to the Point. Do not spare the horse. He can bear it!"

Even as he spoke, he extended his hand to assist her into the saddle.

"How can I thank you," she began, but he cut her short.

"I want no thanks—if my life would benefit you, I would give it gladly. Do not hesitate. I will explain to Mrs. Noyes. Now, onward, and success attend you!"

He spoke a word to Nero in some foreign tongue, and the animal bounded forward like the wind. It almost seemed as if he knew that the chances of life and death hung upon the speed he made. Up hill and down he never faltered, and though she was riding at a pace which astonished the dwellers of every house she passed, it seemed to Pearl that she had never ridden so slowly.

What if she were too late? She drew out her watch. It was only ten minutes to the hour. She urged on the horse with whip and voice; and in another moment the rugged cliffs of Wizard's Point burst in view; and afar off, mellowed and softened by the distance, she heard the thunder of the sea on the sunken reefs.

The Point was a mile in length, but the sand was solid and firm, and Nero dashed over it like a whirlwind. A turn in the path brought Pearl in view of a level plot of ground, covered with scanty grass. In the centre rose two stunted pines, and beneath their shadow, distant about ten paces from each other, stood Max Livingstone and Colonel Rudolph.

The men's faces were stern and relentless as the grave, and in their extended hands they held each a pistol. Pearl flung herself off her

horse, and rushed between them, just as Rudolph discharged his weapon—and just in time to receive the shot. Max had not fired at all.

She sank to the ground covered in blood, and Max, with a wild cry of anguish and dismay, sprang to her side. And simultaneously Jerry Sawyer appeared on the scene from nobody knew where, and knelt beside the unconscious girl.

"Great heavens!" cried Max, lifting up the bleeding head, "you have killed her!"

Rudolph stood leaning against a tree, his lips bloodless as marble, his face grey and ashen. He seemed incapable of speech or motion.

"Is she dead?" asked Max, in a voice unnatural and unnatural calm. "For if she is, I swear before heaven her murderer shall not leave this place alive."

"Don't be hasty, young gentleman. You'd both of ye ort to be nose-whipped within an inch and a half of yer lives for acting so much like two natural born fools as to come here a setting out to kill one o'th' other. And I vow to man, if I had the governor's old wauwant ox goad here, I'd whip ye with it!"

"Does she live?" exclaimed Max. "Only tell me if she is still alive?"

"Can't yer see for yerself? Her heart beats, and there's some colour in her lips, and she's just signed. I never knew a dead individual to sign, did ever you?"

"Thank Heaven! she lives!"

"Don't take on! She hain't hurt none of any consequence. The bullet jest grazed the back part of her head, and cut off one of them curlz of her hair,"—and he lifted up a long detached lock of hair from the grass. "If it had gone a grain nearer, it would have gone into her brain, and then you nor him should have left this place with a whole bone in your bodies. Between you both, and old Bett Morgan, you'll be the death of her yet! Lieutenant, it's time you was off to your ship!"

"I know it. The train which takes me to Plymouth leaves in fifteen minutes. I have barely time to catch it. Yet how can I go? How can I leave her thus?"

"She's better off without you. I'll take care of her."

Max lifted up the girl's drooping head, and looked into the sweet, pale face with brimming eyes and such an expression of unutterable yearning that Jerry exclaimed:

"You can kiss her, if you're beset so very bad! Won't hurt her now she's wounded."

Livingstone pressed his lips to the white forehead, and held her passive hands a moment to his heart, then snatching up the curl of hair which Rudolph's bullet had severed, he thrust it into his bosom, and strode rapidly away. Colonel Rudolph by this time had recovered something of his suave equanimity, and came up to offer his assistance.

"Don't want none of it," said Jerry, brusquely. "A man that goes round a-shooting of women folks hain't of no account no how. He's too low for a decent feller like Jerry Sawyer. Bequin to wipe his shoes onto. You jest make yourself scarce, or by the jumping jingoes, I'll report you to Squire Badger afore the sun goes down. I reckon there's some law left in the land yet, and the closer you keep about this 'ere affair the better it'll be for ye. For hark ye, my fine gentleman, I know a little secret about it which if generally circulated wouldn't keep yer good name more than four and sixpence worth; that pistol that you give to the lieutenant won't load! 'Twas only capped. Look here!" and taking up the weapon Livingstone had dropped, Jerry pulled the trigger. There was a sharp percussion burst, but no smoke. Sawyer had spoken the truth. The pistol had not been loaded.

Rudolph's face grew purple with shame, and then blanched out to a grey white. He had not calculated on having his villainy so completely unmasked.

"Coward!" he cried, hotly, "you were watching me!"

"Be mighty keerful how you call names, or you may have the thickness of your skull tested afore you know it. Yes, I was a watching of ye."

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I got an inkling of this affair last night, no matter how, and as I could leave my shop well enough now that I have got a clerk, I determined to be here. Ye see, I'd read a lot about duels, but I'd never seen one, and I wanted to be a witness to one to have to tell about it to my grandchildren. I knew that if you was concerned in it there'd be foul play, and though I must say that Lieutenant Livingstone was a fool not to have thrashed you in the first place, instead of coming here, I didn't want the chap to be murdered. So I jest arriv about an hour afore ye, and hid behind that rock there, and seed that goose of a lieutenant give 'em up to you for that purpose. I was so provoked with him that I could have took him across my knee and spanked him! He acted jest as if he thought you was a man of honour."

"Sir!" cried Rudolph, indignantly.

"Jest you keep still while I am talking. I seed that you didn't put no cartridge into one of the pistols, and I noticed when you give him this you give him the one that warn't charged. And then you and he agreed to fire as soon as he had counted three, and you, like a concerned coward and villain as you are, fired afore he'd got his mouth shut after saying two; and now have this spot instantly, or by the jumping jeeves, I'll make short work of ye!"

Rudolph uttered a fierce oath, but the determined aspect of Jerry decided him to retreat, which he did immediately, leaving Jerry to watch over the inanimate form of Pearl. Not long unanimate, for directly she moved, and opened her eyes to meet his honest face.

"Is he killed?" she asked eagerly.

"Who?" exclaimed Jerry, feigning the most profound ignorance.

"Max."

"If you mean Lieutenant Livingstone, he was alive and well about five minutes ago, to my strong knowledge."

"And now?"

"Now, I expect he's steaming for Plymouth, to jine his ship. It sail to-morrer."

"And he was unhurt?"

"Yes. You jumped in between him and the colonel just in season to get the benefit of the colonel's bullet in your hair, and get one of the prettiest of your yellow curls shot clean off, and Livingstone he's gone off with it stuck in his buzzon! Spec' he thinks to have a safety chain made out of it."

The swift crimson flashed over Pearl's face at the proof of her last lover's affection. Though he had professed to believe her false, he must regard her kindly still, or he would not have dared to keep anything which had been hers.

And though she knew that henceforth they must be strangers—and though she felt that it was wrong utterly for her to desire to retain a place in his heart—still the knowledge that she was yet dear to him was the sweetest comfort she had known. She clasped her hands softly together, and exclaimed under her breath:

"He loves me still! he loves me still!"

"What did you observe?" asked Jerry.

"Nothing," she replied, blushing until she looked quite like the radiant Pearl of other and happier days.

The injury Pearl had sustained was no more than a slight grazze of the skin, and this her profuse hair completely covered.

"Look here, Miss Pearl," said Jerry, "I'm going to let you go into the house by the back way, and up to your chamber, where you can wash off the blood, and put on some tother sotches, and not let your marm know what has been going on. It's best nobody should know, is would make too much talk."

Pearl assented gladly, for she had been greatly troubled about the explanation she must make Mrs. Noyes. As it happened, though, no explanation was needed. The hunchback had told the good woman that Pearl had expressed a desire to ride Nero, and he had brought the horse over to gratify her; and the only anxiety Mrs. Noyes had felt was that the "pecky critter" would throw her darling.

Pearl assented gladly, for she had been greatly troubled about the explanation she must make Mrs. Noyes. As it happened, though, no explanation was needed. The hunchback had told the good woman that Pearl had expressed a desire to ride Nero, and he had brought the horse over to gratify her; and the only anxiety Mrs. Noyes had felt was that the "pecky critter" would throw her darling.

CHAPTER VI.

BETT MORGAN haunted Pearl like her shadow. The girl could not walk but that fatal woman was by her side; if she took her boat out on the waters it would not be long before the sharp craft which owned Bett Morgan as mistress would soon shoot alongside the "Ocean Queen." If she slept in her chamber, the pale face of Bett hovered constantly over her in her troubled dreams—and the worst of all was that she could not repel her.

The dark secret they shared in common, and which made Pearl shudder with horror every time she thought of it, prevailed that she would only live on a short while, and endure in silence.

Her suffering had not come to her through any sin of her own, and that was some comfort, and she needed every mite and grain of solace she could gather.

The ominous hints in regard to Pearl Noyes which had prevailed among the villagers soon changed to accusations, and ere long it became patent all over Highfield and its vicinity, that Pearl was intimate with Bett Morgan, because she was connected with the handsome hunchback.

As the foul story circulated, it grew in size, until at last poor Pearl's character was torn in pieces, and her good name scattered to the winds.

Her young lady friends avoided her, young men laughed when she passed her, and the old ladies of the place, over their cups of strong tea, exclaimed attacking gentry of the age, and wished that the good old times might return once more—the times when, if one might credit their assertions, there was no such thing as sin or wrong in all the world.

The climax came at last. One quiet Sabbath, in May, Pearl, never before, attended service in the old church by the roadside. Ever since she had been baptised by the changed pastor and christened Pearl Noyes—so many years ago—she had been a member of the little flock, and sat with them at the communion table. This day was communion day, and as usual, Pearl took her seat beside her mother.

When the old deacon reached the seat in which she was seated, Pearl extended her hand to take the bread, but the plate was drawn back; she looked up in profound surprise. Deacon May murmured in a low, distinct voice the question her eyes asked.

"I have been instructed to refuse you this token of our Lord's death and burial," he said, passing on to Mrs. Noyes.

Pearl grew a little paler, but she only folded her hands in token of submission. Not so Mrs. Noyes. The good woman, though eminently pious, had very little meekness in her composition, and she looked upon this as an insult to her child. She rose angrily—a red spot burning on either cheek—but Pearl laid her hand on her arm, and forced her to resume her seat.

"Be calm, dearest mother, for my sake. Look at me. See how well I bear it," she said, in a low tone.

"But I will not bear it! To be refused like this, before the whole church, it is too much? You, my little lamb! my dove—a thousand times purer than any of those long-faced hypocrites!"

In her indignation we will believe that Mrs. Noyes forgot she was speaking of her brethren and sisters.

"Hush, mother! I have forfeited the right to sit with the pure-hearted, I suppose. They believe that I have done wrong; they're not to blame."

"Let us go home! I will not remain to be mocked by their false worship."

"No, we will remain. God still reigns, mother. Do not lose faith in that."

So, greatly to Mrs. Noyes' discomfort, Pearl sat still, and listened to the service. Bewildered at the girl's singular calmness, they did not know the fierce storm which raged within that unruffled exterior.

Mrs. Noyes stopped at noon to give the parson and deacon "a piece of her mind," which made those highly respectable personages open their eyes, and wonder within themselves if they had made a blunder about anything—while Pearl went home and shut herself up in her chamber to weep and pray.

To pray for guidance and support, and to ask God if it pleased him, not to keep her here in trial too long. Life looked so very dreary to her, and death seemed such a sure escape from all earthly evils.

"Bear ye one another's burdens."

By-and-bye, should she not receive full recompence?

(To be continued.)

THE VESPER BELLS.

Hand! the vesper-bells are chiming,
Chiming sweetly, joyful bells;
And their music floating sweetly,
On God and love in gladness tell;
Hear their psalms of joy and gladness
As their music unswell, swells,
Heartbeats change to joy from sadness
By those heavenly vesper bells.

Chorus—

When sweetly chime, By music above
me,
Sweet vesper bells,
To Heavenly music assembling,
Heavenly vesper bells.

Chiming, chiming, chiming sweetly,
Their music floats over hills and
valleys,
Whispering music on heavenly
forests,
Of God and love, sweet vesper bells;
And my heart in gladness lingers,
Round thy hallowed home so dear,
And my home in heaven seems nearer
Whence the vesper bells I hear.

Chiming, chiming, chiming sweetly,
Hear thy music,
Sweetly, sweetly, sweetly chiming,
Holy vesper bells. D. H.

THE ARTIST'S BOOTS.

THANES to the good offices of a good friend, a poverty-stricken young artist obtained a commission to paint the portrait of a rich lady. Upon going to wait upon the lady he managed to get himself up very creditably as to hat, coat and pantaloons, but his boots—ah, his boots! There was an aperture in the toe of each where the sole had parted company with the upper. On the road to the lady's mansion a sudden and violent shower came up, which flooded the sidewalks, and when he entered the drawing-room he perceived to his horror that his boots had been turned into pumps, and that at each step the water within them spouted forth over the costly carpets as if from the blow-holes of lively young whales.

He, however, was not disconcerted, but said gracefully, to the lady of the mansion, "Upon my word, madame, these siphon boots, that are all the fashion and are so highly praised, may be all they are said to be for out-door use, but for wearing in the house they will never answer at all, at all."

Copies of the instructions of the First Lord, respecting flogging in the Navy, dated July last, have been issued. They direct that corporal punishment shall in no case amount to more than twenty-five lashes, whether awarded by the commander of the ship or by the sentence of a court-martial.



THE OPENING OF THE PLOT.]

THE RAILROAD OF LIFE.

IT was a dull time in Broad Street, one sultry afternoon in August. Business was over for the day, but Mr. Emerson still lingered in his office—perhaps because no happy home called him away. Certainly the close little room, with its piles of account books and swarms of flies, could have possessed no attraction for any but a homeless man.

The day had been one of unprecedented success, even to Mr. Emerson; a lucky speculation in cotton resulted in a very large fortune. Yet very few could tell that he made a lucky investment that day, as nothing happened any further than giving some money to the little flower-girl who daily brought her choicest bouquets to the wealthy cotton buyer.

If any man in the city had cause for satisfaction and self-gratification, it was Mr. Emerson, when he remembered the struggles by which he attained his present commercial eminence. It was well known among his acquaintances that, not many years before, he had returned penniless to his native city after a short residence abroad, which had proved neither creditable nor profitable.

He was no misanthrope, but a cloud of sorrow seemed to hang over him in his happiest moments, and although his constant reserve secured him from the intrusions of the curious,

rumour gave an unhappy marriage as the cause; but beyond that of speculation, society had no resource. Young Harry Keller stepped into the office on his way home this afternoon, and was warmly welcomed.

"Well, Harry, how has the world used you today?" Mr. Emerson inquired, shaking hands with his friend.

"Business has been unusually brisk at our place, thank you. I heard of your streak of fortune with genuine pleasure. When Stanley told me of it this morning, I said, if there is a man in the city who deserves success, it is my friend Emerson."

"You are wasting enthusiasm, Harry. I think we all get more than our deserts in this world, or we should be poor indeed," Mr. Emerson replied, gravely but kindly, and glancing towards his friend, he detected the usual absence of gaiety. "What has gone wrong with you, Harry?" More obstructions in the course of true love?" he asked, with his pleasant humour.

Harry Keller, manly fellow that he was, ordinarily cool and self-controlled, struggled with some great emotion. It was a moment before he could speak calmly.

"It has reached a crisis," he said at length; "Mr. Gordon was not content with shutting Matilda up in a school in some out of the way place, but he has sent his rascally son Gerald up there to torment her with his attentions. Their motive is plain enough; Gerald has squandered half her money in speculations, and

means to marry Matilda to prevent a settlement."

"Where is the school situated?" Mr. Emerson asked.

"In a small place called Laurel Hill. Bell Landon, who is home on a visit, brought me a letter from Matilda. She says the poor girl is very unhappy, although she is greatly loved by the whole of the school, who do all in their power to make her life more pleasant. Mr. Emerson, you know I love Matilda with all my heart, as I have often told you so," said Harry, with his cheek glowing, and speaking with love-like pride. "I do not object to showing you her letter; you see that it places me in a strange position."

Mr. Emerson unfolded the perfumed sheet, delicately omitting to read the affectionate address, and commenced a little way down the page.

"GERALD'S attentions are becoming positively unbearable. He intercepts all my letters, and has so prejudiced Mrs. Rivington against my friends that I fear no one could gain her permission to visit me; as my guardian's son he, of course, has many privileges which would be allowed to no one else, and he uses them to make me unhappy. I am well aware, dear Harry, of all your scruples against marrying me before you have a fortune of your own, and much as I honour your consideration, I cannot think it reasonable or necessary to leave me longer unprotected. I have a plan which I think might prove successful, if the parties will be agreeable. Mr. Emerson was a friend of my dear father in the happy days of the past, and I can remember his visits at our house when I was quite a child. If he could be persuaded to assist us, I think by introducing himself as an old friend, he might gain Mrs. Rivington's consent to take me to ride. At some convenient place you could await us, when we could call upon our friend, the Rev. Mr. Arnold, and be married before our plan was discovered. I know you will not think me unmaidenly in speaking thus plainly, dear Harry, and you can judge how unhappy I must be to resort to such a remedy. Let me hear from you soon. Au revoir. I am as ever your loving

MATILDA."

Mr. Emerson's face was very smiling when he returned the letter to his friend.

"So I am expected to enact the benevolent and chivalrous Mr. Pickwick in this little drama," he said in his quaint way.

"Something very like it, truly, minus the various blunders and accidents which invariably befall that worthy gentleman," Harry replied, appreciating the humour.

"I suppose your happiness would be incomplete without this fair Matilda?" Mr. Emerson said, musingly; "but this is delicate business, gaining the friendship of a lady for the purpose of doing injury to her school."

"I have thought of that, and so has Matilda. Consideration for Mrs. Rivington alone prevented her from taking this step many months ago."

"What name did you mention?" Mr. Emerson questioned, hastily.

"Mrs. Rivington; she is a widow, a very beautiful and accomplished woman. I met her once and was charmed with her."

"Do you know how long she has been in that place?" Mr. Emerson questioned, with changing colour.

"I do not; my interest in the school dates from the time Matilda went there; but Laurel Hill is so insignificant a place, one might be buried there for several years, and few would know of their existence. Is the lady a friend of yours?"

"No; oh, no! It is merely a coincidence of names," was the reply. "I will think of this matter, and let you know my decision, Harry. I have an engagement yet this afternoon," said Mr. Emerson, rose hurriedly.

His whole manner seemed altered, and young Keller, intent upon his own trouble, interpreted the change as auguring ill for his cause.

"Mr. Emerson," Harry interrupted, hastily.

"I will detain you but an instant, yet I cannot let you leave me, uncertain of your opinion of the course I ought to take in this affair. Is it possible you disapprove of my marrying Matilda under such circumstances?"

"No, Harry. I do not see that you could be expected to refuse such tempting proposals; not every young man has such at his disposal. The fortune is of course trifling in comparison with other considerations; but, Harry," and Mr. Emerson speaks with an earnestness which amounts to almost solemnity, laying his hand upon Harry's shoulder and looking gravely into his face, "have you weighed well the importance of this step? Have you considered that marriage is something more solemn than a pleasant acquaintance—that it is a stern reality, requiring much forbearance and self-renunciation, and, if lacking these elements, may be of all existences the most intolerable?"

Mr. Emerson paused, as if unable to say more. Harry had never seen his friend thus agitated before, and while it recalled to his memory floating rumours of his early life, it touched his young heart to know how deeply he must have suffered. He was equally earnest when he spoke again.

"If Matilda had been devoid of wealth she would have been my wife long ago, and I should have rejoiced in each struggle with fortune for her dear sake. That her love is equal to mine, her letter can prove. When I can say truly that it will be the aim of my life to cherish and guard her, may I not reasonably hope that our future will be one of happiness?"

He would have said, "That we may escape the misery and unhappiness that falls on so many," but delicacy checked his words.

"Heaven grant you peace!" was the fervent reply. "You have done much to cheer my lonely life, Harry, and when you have a wife and home to gladden your own, you must not forget your old friend, and allow the obliging and convenient Mr. Pickwick to be laid neglected upon the shelf," he added, pleasantly.

"Mr. Emerson, you do me a great injustice by the thought, and it is not like you to doubt your friend. You must know how warmly Matilda and I will always welcome you at our home, and how sacredly we all cherish you in our remembrance of this kindness," Harry answered, with emotion.

"It is little to remember; if your happiness is secured I am well repaid. In regard to others—I am quite indifferent to the opinion of Matilda's guardian or his son; but I must confess some scruples against such a design upon the peace of that preceptress, Mrs. Rivington, I believe you called her," and Mr. Emerson spoke with hesitation. "I fear such a scheme against an unprotected lady is scarcely consistent with the character of Mr. Pickwick," he added, laughingly, as he parted from his friend.

If Harry Keller, with the elasticity of a youthful nature, buried his troubles in the sweet oblivion of slumber that night, he was more fortunate than his friend. Long after the stones in the street below ceased to echo the footsteps of the passing crowd, Mr. Emerson paced his lonely room.

The incidents of the afternoon had disturbed his thoughts from their usual quiet course, and now, after hours of struggle, he still battled with an army of long buried hopes and affections, each bitterness and transgression of the past standing forth like an accusing foe.

He paused at last before an antique cabinet of rare value and workmanship, unfastened the locks, and throwing open the doors, disclosed a portrait set something after the manner of an ancient shrine.

The beauty and life of the picture alone was sufficient to betray a careless observer into admiration; but standing as the only visible link between the desolation of the present and the past of which a part at least had been one of bewilderment and happiness, it was more than priceless to the lonely man who guarded it with miserly care.

The canvas bore two figures. A woman, young and lovely, but little beyond girlhood; a roguish smile encircling her small and perfect

mouth, but a tender light in her violet eyes, as she gazed upon the dimpled, laughing child in her arms.

It was difficult to recognise the imperturbable broker in this sad, agitated man, over whom these pictures possessed such painful but irresistible fascination. The long years of the past, which he had so jealously guarded from prying eyes, memory with unsparing hand spread plainly before him, and, after years of repentance, it was more than he could bear unmoved.

When Mr. Emerson warned Harry of the solemnity of marriage, his mind was full of his own memories, and of his sufferings; and he feared to see his friend place his happiness in the hands of a young and undisciplined girl. Very like Harry Keller had Mr. Emerson been ten years ago.

At that time he was the unrestrained master of his own destiny, and also had a liberal fortune, well calculated by his generous, unsuspecting nature to become the tool of craftiness and design. Three years of student life at continental colleges were fast corrupting him, teaching him recklessness and desperation, when his heart was taken captive by Helen Rivington, a pure and lovely girl, the daughter of a minister.

From that time he led a different life; forsook his gay companions, and filled with honour those positions for which by nature he was so well qualified. He became the kind son of the aged clergyman, the devoted husband, and the tender father of a little girl he called "Ruby."

Four years of happiness in a quiet town, then Mr. Emerson resolved to travel with his wife and child. They settled in Liverpool for the winter, and there occurred the errors he had now to repent.

In the happiness of his married life, he had forgotten the exciting pleasures of former days, or supposed the taste which craved them supplanted by one of purer nature; that it only slumbered to burst forth again upon the renewal of familiar scenes and acquaintances, was not the evidence of a depraved heart, but the scars which a course of transgression and waywardness invariably leaves.

Helen was conscious of a change in her husband, but her pure, refined nature could have no sympathy with his temptations, and she met his excuses and apologies with coolness and reproach.

Each day increased the estrangement, and one night when Helen, unable to sleep, awaited her husband's return, he was brought home insensible, flushed with wine, and wounded in a duel over an actress, who brought him in her carriage, and then hung around his bed, weeping and wringing her hands.

Helen stood motionless, gazing on with an aching heart; but when the actress, with natural kindness, would have poured out her explanations and pity, she pushed her away like something unclean, and, gathering up her skirts, swept from the room. She was told her husband's wound was trifling—that he would soon recover, and waiting to hear no more, she fled with her child, leaving no trace of her course.

The remorse that came to the young husband upon his return to consciousness may be imagined. It was in vain that he employed every means to discover his deeply injured wife; at length, finding search useless, he placed the remnant of his fortune with a friend to be held in trust for her, hoping that she might come forward and claim it when no longer pursued.

But all these years had given nothing but struggle and discipline: in loneliness and sorrow he had achieved a noble manhood, though tonight the light from the overhanging chandelier betrayed many a silver hair, and his broad, white forehead was seamed by many lines of care.

In the prime of life Mr. Emerson stood alone, uncheered by affection, bereft of the ties which makes life a pleasure, haunted by remorse and the memory of happy days—the sole remnant of the past the pictured resemblance of those he had so fondly loved and deeply wronged.

Whatever scruples Mr. Emerson entertained against the part he was solicited to undertake for the benefit of his young friends must have been happily overcome, for, not many days after the proposal was made to him, he departed for the scene of action.

The delightful freshness of the country scenery, and the bracing mountain air, were invigorating to the city business man who saw so little of nature; his spirits rose rapidly, and when they reached the village of Laurel Hill, which lay basking in the sunlight, blissfully unconscious of any design upon its peacefulness, he felt equal to the performance of any task, however difficult.

Just enough of day remained for Mr. Emerson to acquaint himself with the location of the principal features of the place, including, of course, the young ladies' seminary. A conversation with mine host of the hotel made him familiar with most of the residents of the place.

Pretty Matilda Campbell had received due notice of Mr. Emerson's intended arrival, and when that gentleman sallied forth in the morning, a short walk brought him in contact with a young lady to whom the encounter was no surprise.

But even the pretty face of Matilda did not prevent him from gazing in a puzzling, eager way upon the little girl who accompanied her. It was the way we often gaze upon a face which recalls a lost or absent friend. Matilda was puzzled by his attraction; but half fearful of mistake, she advanced to meet him, the colour fluttering in and out of her cheeks.

"I cannot be mistaken, I think. You are my father's friend, Mr. Emerson," she said, timidly.

"Quite right, and you are, or rather were, my little friend Matilda." Mr. Emerson returned, with sincere pleasure at the meeting, looking down with something of tenderness upon the pretty girl he had promised to befriend in such a strange way.

"I remember too well the happy days when I was your little friend Matilda, and searched your pockets for bon bons you were sure to bring me," she replied, tears welling up in her dark eyes. "And you will be the same kind friend now, Mr. Emerson, when I have no dear father to guard me. Will you not?" she asked, prettily.

He pressed her little hand kindly, answering in his quaint way, although his heart was tender for the orphaned girl:

"I cannot refuse my little friend her wish, though she asks me for a husband instead of bon bons," he added, softly.

She was a blushing rose this time, answering him only by tears in her dark eyes.

"Maggie," she said after a moment, addressing the child, to whom Mr. Emerson's eyes wandered frequently, "do you want to buy some candy at the confectioner's? Our box is quite empty, I think. I will wait for you at the corner."

"Who is your little companion?" Mr. Emerson asked, as the child ran away.

"Maggie Rivington, the daughter of our preceptress. The poor child is fatherless, as I am, but she has a loving mother to care for her."

Mr. Emerson seemed on the point of questioning further, but checked the impulse.

"My dear Matilda," he said, and his voice was almost grave, "I cannot give my encouragement and assistance to the scheme until you assure me that you have not decided upon it without much thought and consideration. Your happiness as well as Harry's is very dear to me, and I would grieve to see you rashly take a step which might bring sorrow and wretchedness to you both."

"Please, Mr. Emerson, do not think me childish or frivolous. I love Harry too sincerely to urge him to an act which I did not think would be for his happiness, as well as my own," she answered with womanly earnestness. "I have but a moment to explain our plans," she continued, hurriedly, "for I see some of our teachers coming. Fortunately, Gerald Gordon has an imperative business engagement, and has

left me unguarded for once, and this morning Mrs. Rivington was unexpectedly called from home. It will not be difficult to gain the consent of Miss Fuller, the assistant teacher, to take me to ride. Harry is waiting for us at the clergyman's, a few miles from here, and the absence of two sentinels is too favourable an opportunity to be lost, although I had not expected to elope till to-morrow," she added, laughingly.

Matilda had only time to assume a careless air, when a number of young lady pupils and their teacher approached.

"May I detain you a moment, Miss Fuller?" Matilda asked, in her sweet, persuasive way. "I have just met a gentleman who visited my father's house when I was a little girl. May I not introduce him to you?" adding, before she could remonstrate. "This is my friend, the instructor, Miss Fuller, Mr. Emerson. Your mutual experience of my waywardness ought to make you friends," she said, gaily. "I doubt not Mr. Emerson could tell you some terrible stories of my childhood."

"I am not inclined to believe that you were so very terrible, my dear," the teacher replied, looking fondly at her pretty young charge.

"If I remember rightly, Matilda was quite a faultless little girl, with the exception of a great fondness for confections, in which respect I perceive she has not changed," the gentleman returned, pleasantly, pointing to the package Matilda Rivington was at the moment placing in her hands.

"She is the good fairy of the school, and as generous of her gifts as the goddess of plenty," Miss Fuller remarked, kindly.

"I was in the act of inviting Matilda to ride with me as you came up, Miss Fuller; I wish to see something of this beautiful country, and it would add to my enjoyment if my young friend would accompany me. I shall have an extra seat in the carriage, if you will accept it," Mr. Emerson hastened to add, seeing her hesitation, and anxious to avert suspicion, and yet trembling for his invitation.

"You are kind to include me, but I should be unable to leave my scholars," Miss Fuller replied, reluctantly, for such indulgences were rare in her monotonous life; "but I see no reason why Matilda may not enjoy the pleasure, provided you take a third person, which is one of Mrs. Rivington's rules."

Mr. Emerson was silent in despair, but Matilda came to the rescue.

"Maggie has been longing for a drive; may she not be indulged now?"

"Oh, please say I may go, dear Miss Fuller," Maggie pleaded, in her childish way.

"I see no further objection except to limit your drive between the hours of two and five o'clock," Miss Fuller said, finally.

"I thank you for not dooming me to a solitary afternoon," Mr. Emerson remarked to the teacher, as he wished the ladies good-morning, and turned away with a slight misgiving for his intended deception, while the unsuspecting Miss Fuller departed unusually happy, satisfied with the performance of her duty toward her pupil, and rejoicing that circumstances enabled her to oblige the agreeable gentleman, whose image lingered in her memory, and became strangely mingled among arithmetical examples and geographical boundaries the remainder of the day.

At the appointed time Mr. Emerson assisted Matilda and her little friend into his carriage, and they drove away, the envy and admiration of the school. Matilda was too sensible to attempt the removal of any of her baggage, but her pretty summer suit of grey poplin, while it excited no suspicion, was suitable for travel, with the additional advantage of being very becoming.

The poor girl was nervous and excited, although she tried bravely to conquer her emotion. Maggie did the talking for all. Seated by Mr. Emerson, holding the whip or reins, the child was supremely happy, her sweet voice ringing out in the unrestrained glee of childhood. They were at their destination before Matilda could believe half the distance had been traversed.

"Mr. Emerson!" she called, from the carriage.

But his quick eye had detected Harry before she spoke. Matilda sprang out of the carriage without assistance, and ran up the walk.

"Where is Matilda going?" Maggie asked, somewhat alarmed.

"To see a friend of hers. Would you be afraid to sit alone in the carriage a few moments, if I fasten the horses?" Mr. Emerson asked of his little companion.

"I shall not be afraid," she answered, courageously; "but please don't stay very long or we shall lose our ride," she pleaded.

Mr. Emerson found his friends awaiting his presence. He gave the fair bride away, and in a few moments Matilda was no longer an unprotected girl. After the conclusion of the ceremony they returned to the carriage, as it had been arranged that Mr. Emerson was to drive them to the station, and then return with Maggie to meet the surprise which would follow the discovery of her flight.

Maggie had scarcely heeded the addition to the party in her delight to be in motion, but when the station was reached, and she understood that she was to lose her friend, her grief was uncontrollable, and she clung to Matilda, begging her to stay, amid tears and caresses.

Mr. Emerson thought his hands were full by this time; Maggie's distress quite disturbed his composure; but to his great relief the train came at last, and Matilda was bidding them good-bye from a window.

"We shall be in London in a week, and when you come, let me thank you for your kindness," Matilda was saying, when a gentleman, metchup in hand, sauntered along the platform, and attracted by the voice, glanced up at the window.

It was a mutual recognition, and each changed colour. Matilda felt very secure in her new position, and could not forbear giving her old enemy a thrust.

"Good-bye, Mr. Gordon. That unfortunate engagement prevented your presence at my wedding; but I must beg Mr. Emerson to make my excuses," she said, in a low but significant tone, as the train moved away, leaving the gentleman speechless from astonishment.

"I demand to know by what right you have interfered in this affair, since I am referred to you for explanation," he said, angrily, addressing Mr. Emerson.

"We are upon equal grounds, then, as I shall demand an explanation of your singular conduct toward your father's ward, as well as a strict account of her property," Mr. Emerson returned, coolly.

"What explanation do you intend to give Mrs. Rivington of this infamous business?" he asked, insolently.

"Should I fail to justify my conduct in that lady's opinion, I will call upon Mr. Gordon for assistance," his companion replied, firmly; and, placing the little girl in the carriage, he turned his horses toward the seminary.

Mr. Gordon drove in the same direction, evidently determined to give his account of the affair before Mr. Emerson could offer any explanation of his conduct. It was a sharp race for a few moments, when Mr. Emerson checked his horses, wisely concluding it best to allow his opponent to receive the first shock of the surprise, shrewdly guessing the commotion his announcement would make. As he expected, he was himself an object of interest to the young ladies, who were gathered in groups around the grounds, eagerly discussing the eloquent.

"Mamma is at home; I hear her talking," Maggie exclaimed, as they entered the house. "She is in the library. Come, Mr. Emerson, I will tell her what a nice ride we had, and she shall not blame you," she was saying, as she led the way to the room.

"The most astonishing piece of rascality and impudence," Mr. Gordon was saying, angrily.

"Oh, mamma, you must not blame this gentleman," Maggie burst forth.

Mrs. Rivington rose to receive her singular visitor, waiting in a cool, haughty way for him to speak, but, receiving no answer nor explanation, she looked up to see the gentleman leaning

heavily against a table for support, evidently struggling with some emotion. Their eyes met in one gaze, which revealed more than words. Striving to retain her composure, she grasped the child, and would have fled from the room had not Mr. Emerson detained her.

"Can you leave me thus after all these years, Helen? Has not my suffering and sorrow atoned for the past?" he asked, passionately, holding her fainting form, and pressing kisses upon her cold lips, regardless of the astonishment of spectators, when, lifting his inimitable wife in his arms, and bidding Maggie lead the way, he carried her to her own room.

The hours which passed in pleadings and explanations that brought those long-divided but loving hearts together, belong not to the world. Laurel Hill lost its beloved preceptor, but Miss Fuller filled her place with honour.

Mr. Emerson has grown younger every day since the time he acted Mr. Pickwick for the benefit of his young friends, and his wife laughingly declares she notices a growing resemblance to that benevolent and chivalrous gentleman. He is happy in the fullest sense of the word; there is perfect confidence and sympathy between him and Helen now, and in Maggie's opinion there is not another such a man in the whole world as her dear papa.

Harry is as much in love with his dear Matilda as on their wedding-day, and Mr. Emerson has no reason to look for clouds in their future. Meeting Harry two months after his marriage, he offered him a partnership in his firm, which he gladly accepted. The day after their marriage the following letter was written to Mr. Gordon from his dutiful son:

"DEAR FATHER.—My game is all up. Matilda has eloped with that fellow, Keller. I sail for America in first steamer. If you are not ready with thirty thousand, I advise you to follow my course, for Keller will be hard on you for the money."

In which opinion Mr. Gerald Gordon was wrong, for neither Matilda nor Harry could add to the old man's sorrow when he confessed to having lost half her fortune in an unlucky speculation in which his son had involved him. M. W. F.

FACETIES.

DIVISION OF LABOUR.

THE CAPTAIN (to stable lad, who is mounted on a newly-purchased animal): "Wait, Tim, how's he go?"

THE (whose mount pulls a bit): "Oh, well, yes, son, well, and shurn, don't he ought for if he carries me I carries his great 'ead, and I faith I've been thinkin' as his is best half o' the bargin."

A DRAMA IN REAL LIFE. (Scene: Smoking-room of the Rally Club. Time: Midnight. Dramatis Personae: Brown and Robinson.)

BROWN (a happy bachelor): "Waistaw! Another of those sixpenny cigars, and just one more—as before, you know. Yes, Robinson, as I was saying, a truly shocking state of affairs that over in Russia. Terrible frows, those Nihilists. The poor Czar, why, it's had enough to be shot at in the street, but, by Jove, you know, things are come to a pretty pass when one is blown up in one's own house!"

ROBINSON (a much-married man): "Ah, my dear fellow (looks at his watch; sighs; rises, and prepares to depart home). The Czar of Russia is not the only man who is blown up in his own house!"

(Sighs again, exit.)

Judy.

DELICATELY PUT.

CUSTOMER: "You'll recollect what I owe you?"

LANDLORD: "Certainly; but you won't object to my assisting my memory with a memorandum on my door."

CUSTOMER: "But, hang it, all the world will see that!"

LANDLORD: "Not if you leave me your great coat to hang over it." —Funny Folks.

HARD TO MATCH.

AUNT TOWZEE thinks there can be little love in a good many royal marriages. She lately read an account of an exalted couple who were so reluctant to be "made one," that it took six clergymen to marry them. —Funny Folks.

THE AWFULLY GRAND!

WEALTHY CAD: "Look here—bring me some dinner, old man. The best you've got."

WALTER: "Diner à la carte, m'sieu?"

W. C.: "Cart be hanged! Dinner a la carriage!" —Funny Folks.

VERY PRONOUNCED.

SWELL (to old gentleman): "Can you tell me if, the next station is Ernill?"

OLD GENTLEMAN: "Ernill? I don't know such a place. If you mean Herne Hill—yes, it is the next station." —Fun.

DO YOU SEE ANY GRIN?

LITTLE BOY (pausing in front of a bust of smiling boy): "I say, ma."

MA: "Yes, dear, don't you think it very pretty?"

L. B. (thoughtfully): "Yes, but I say, ma, is it always laughing?" —Fun.

HOUSEHOLD MISTS.

(Hints to servants.)

Be particularly careful, on entering a new situation, to commence as you intend to go.

Never be persuaded to sacrifice your independence by wearing a cap; if your mistress does not wear one, why should you?

Remember that the kitchen belongs to the servants, and resent, as an insult, any attempt on the part of your mistress to intrude her presence where it is not required.

Of course, no lady, "as is a lady," would do such a thing, and a prompt display of your unqualified disapprobation will no doubt prevent a recurrence of the attempt to trample on your rights.

Your mistress would probably object to your presence in the drawing-room, and therefore has no excuse for thrusting herself into your apartment.

Although you are in service, you are not bound to sacrifice your health on account of any tyrannical prejudice on the part of your master or mistress.

So bear in mind the old proverb, "After dinner sit awhile, after supper walk a mile," and never fail to take a little gentle exercise after the evening meal.

A stroll as far as the area-gate will be found very beneficial, and if the constitutional can be enlivened by a little cheerful conversation with Robert X2 so much the better.

Some mistresses are excessively (and absurdly) particular about the cold meat being used up. One of the best recipes in existence for using up cold meat, and one that we can recommend from experience, is—a large family of small children.

But, this not being always available, the night constable will be found an excellent method of getting rid of it.

Remember that it is impossible to send anything up to table properly flavoured without previously tasting it, and of course the choicer the article you have to prepare the greater necessity for care, so—never fail to have a basin of soup or a small portion of sweetbread.

Of course you will take them solely in the interest of your master and mistress.

But be careful to keep within the bounds of moderation, or your anxiety to do justice to your employer may lead to the sacrifice of your own health.

—Judy.

A FACT FOR NATURALISTS.

YOUNG HOUSEWIFE: "Dear me! what very small eggs for twopence-halfpenny each! It seems quite extravagant to take them!"

AFABLE DAIRY-WOMAN (who has always a conclusive reply for complaints): "Well, yes, m'm, so it does. But I've always noticed that new-laid eggs are small!" —Judy.

SEW IT SEAMS.

THE TALKING MACHINE is spoken of as a novelty; but surely it has already been outdone by another machine—the Singer! —Funny Folks.

WRITE OR WRONG?

MR. O'BULL wants to know whether Dean Stanley is now convinced that Mr. Carlyle got somebody else to write his autograph for him. —Funny Folks.

SOPHIE SHIPS.

THE first of the line of temperance ships has just been launched on the Clyde. This vessel is warranted to draw water only, and is very different from a drinking vessel.

—Funny Folks.

THE EVEN-TIDE.

I stood at the old, deep window-sill,
As the day was going down,
And watched the hurrying, jostling crowd.

Go home from the grimy town.
The sound of a band in a distant street

Was blent with the tread of rapid feet.

And, anon, like the throb of a pulse's beat.

A vesper bell swayed low.

The throng came surging up, and on
Like swell of a mighty sea;
I heard the roar of its coming sweep.

As it lifted restlessly.
And I thought as I watched the steady flow,

Like an ocean-tide in its ebb and flow,
There are homes that brighten and hearts that glow.

When the even-tide comes in.

The city, washed by its waves all day,
Lay stranded like a wreck,
While the tide set out from her naked sides.

To follow the sunset's beck.
No sound of hammer, or whiz of wheel;

No clink of iron, nor clang of steel;
But only aplash on her silent heel,
When the even-tide comes in.

As I watched, and saw from my quiet nook

Each eager wave uplift,
And its ripples reach toward the shores of rest.

I followed its onward drift;
And I seemed to see on the dear home shore,

At gate, or window, or open door.
The loving watchers that wait no more,

When the even-tide comes in.

Oh, blessed tide of the even time!
None other is like to thee—

Of all the tides that ebb and flow,
Through life's tumultuous sea.

Thou bringest the weary to home, and rest,
Thou bearest our hopes on thy swelling breast;

God grant our waiting be ever blest.
When the even-tide comes in. —G. P.

STATISTICS.

THE SULTAN'S EXPENDITURE.—A Constantinople correspondent gives some curious details respecting the expenditure of the Sultan. This

bankrupt, who can pay neither his creditors nor his civil employees, and whose soldiers are literally starving, manages to waste £2,400,000 per annum on himself and the eunuchs, sultanas, and courtiers that live in his palace. He has 300 cooks, 200 attendants to carry food from the kitchen to the table, ten table-masters to arrange the service, and ten stewards to draw up the daily menus. There are ten employees to unfold the carpet on which he prays, ten coffee-roasters to make his coffee, ten servants to clean his pipes, twenty valets to look after his clothes, eight persons to light his chandeliers, eight others to clean his aviaries, 100 boatmen to row his boat if he makes an excursion on the Bosphorus, five armourers, two hairdressers, and 250 grooms. Altogether, 4,000 persons live at his expense.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POTATO SALAD.—Take your potatoes, not too large ones, and boil them; potatoes that are mealy are not good; when cold, cut in slices and pour the oil on them, and let them stand a little while; slice a third of an onion as fine as possible, and one apple, and mix with the potatoes; add vinegar to taste; salt and pepper. The addition of a Dutch herring makes a herring salad.

A DELICIOUS AND EASILY-MADE STEW.—Take two pounds of gravy-beef, cut off the skin and fat, divide it into pieces about an inch square, wash it, then place it in a large bowl or small crock, cover it with water, or rather add as much as desired for gravy or beef-tea; let it stand an hour, then cover it with a plate, and place it in a slow oven, adding previously a little salt, and, if liked, an onion, cut up fine. It should cook four or five hours, and then there will be enough gravy for delicious and most nutritious beef-tea, as well as an excellent dish of wholesome meat.

BIRD'S NEST PUDDING.—Take six or seven cooking apples, pare them, and remove the cores without breaking the apples. Place them in a pie-dish; next, wash thoroughly four heaped table-spoonsfuls of sago; mix with sufficient cold water to fill the dish containing the apples, and bake in a moderate oven. Cherries, prunes, &c., may be used instead of apples, or tapioca instead of sago; and, if well made, the pudding is palatable, wholesome, and inexpensive.

MISCELLANEOUS.

As an evidence of reaction to healthy activity in trade, it is announced that an outlay of at least two millions sterling is involved in the numbers of contracts signed for buildings and improvements throughout London, which are to commence at the beginning of next month.

MR. CARLYLE has now arrived at his eighty-fourth year. Although the body is weak and failing, the mind of the "sage" is as clear as ever, and an occasional failure of memory is the only trace as yet of intellectual decay.

The insurance offices have lost very heavily within a year. By the death of five persons a million and a half has had to be paid. The Duke of Newcastle, the Marquis of Anglesey, and the Earl of Eife were three of the largest insureds in the country.

It is said that the Princess Louise lost a jewel during her recent sleigh accident in Canada valued at £4,000. Some fifteen or twenty persons spent the greater part of the afternoon searching for it in the snow where the accident occurred.

WHEN I was once in danger from a tiger, said an old East India veteran, "I tried sitting down and sneering at him, as I had no weapon." "How did it work?" eagerly asked a bystander. "Perfectly; the tiger didn't even offer to touch me." "Strange! very strange! How do you account for it?" "Well, sometimes I've thought that it was because I sat on a high branch of a very tall tree."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MABEL G.—To remove superfluous hair on the upper lip, see reply to "A Constant Reader" in our number dated March 6.

BROWN-EYED MADDIE.—1. Very good. 2. Put the milk and sugar in the cup first and then the tea. 3. The cup and saucer should be placed on the right hand of the plate. 4. The introduction by a third party should be made thus: Miss Smith, Mr. Jones—Mr. Jones, Miss Smith.

A LOVER OF COCOA.—As a drink you cannot do better than use Epp's Cocoa, which is considered superior to any other.

A WIDOW.—Yes.

A CONSTANT READER.—In your case, we should opine that the cause of your hair turning gray at twenty-two is the effect of a weakly constitution. We should not advise you to dye it, as the process must be repeated as the hair grows, from the roots.

CURIOS.—1. Under the circumstances, the young lady's mother having known you for so many years and not objecting to the engagement, we should say take no notice of the young sailor's objections. 2. Nineteen is not too young to correspond with a lady of seventeen. 3. We make no charge for giving our advice or answering questions.

ZULU.—We believe the pay of an assistant surgeon in the army is £2. a day; a staff surgeon the same according to rank. Promotion is obtained according to service and qualifications.

C. A. F.—You cannot reduce the colour by fair means. It is constitutional with you. If you are weak and nervous live on plain food—oatmeal and milk for breakfast, vegetables and a little mutton for dinner. Drink water that has been first boiled, no tea or spirit. Go to bed, and get up, early.

W. W.—He should offer her the arm which would bring her on the inside of the walk.

COUNTESS OF ESSIX.—1. Rose is pronounced rou-é; beante de diaole, boh-tah de debsri. 2. To remove sun freckles, take tincture of benzoin, one pint; tincture of tola, half pint; oil of rosemary, quarter ounce. Mix one teaspoonful of this in half a gill of water, and with a towel dipped in it rub well the face night and morning. 3. Handwriting clear, therefore good.

T. W. C.—For a line of two hundred yards a telephone constructed on the same principle as the toy called the lover's telegraph will answer the purpose. The tubes may be of tin, about four inches deep and of the same diameter. Cover the ends with sheepskin, tightly stretched, and connect the two by a cotton thread or a fine copper wire, passing through the middle of the bottom of each, and held by a flat button. If the thread is used it may be supported by suspended loops. The tighter the string is drawn the more distinct will be the sound.

LUKE.—There would be no impropriety for the gentleman, being an intimate friend of the young lady's, asking her parents to allow him, under the circumstances, to see her, and we do not think they would refuse to grant his request unless they thought his presence might excite her and do her injury in her weak state of health.

T. W. E. G.—To make lithographic transfer ink, melt together eight parts of white wax and two parts of white soap, and before they become hot enough to take fire stir in sufficient lampblack to make the mixture black; then allow the whole to burn for thirty seconds. When the flame is extinguished add, a little at a time, two parts of shellac, stirring it in constantly. Put the vessel on the fire again until the mass is kindled, or nearly so. Put out the flame and allow it to cool a little, and then run the mass into moulds.

BROWNS.—Every man and woman should endeavour to look as pleasing as possible in appearance. It is a duty we owe ourselves, because the general run of people judge persons by the clothes they wear, and that being so we ought to consider our friends, and not dress so tamely as to cause them to be ashamed of us.

BOSS and HYACINTH, two friends, would like to correspond with two tradesmen. Boss is twenty-two, fair, tall, fond of home and children. Hyacinth is nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be about twenty-five, dark, of a loving disposition.

TOP, WHIP, and CORD, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Top is twenty, light hair, blue eyes, tall, fond of children. Whip is nineteen, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition. Cord is nineteen, dark hair, hazel eyes, loving, fond of children and music. Respondents must be about eighteen.

ALICE and ALICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Alice is nineteen, dark hair and eyes. Alice is eighteen, good-looking, golden hair, hazel eyes.

LAURA, twenty-one, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four with a view to matrimony.

M. M., twenty, medium height, loving, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be fair, fond of children, good-looking.

A. B., twenty-one, tall, fair, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy.

DAISY, PRIMROSE, and VIOLET, three friends, would like to correspond with three gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Daisy is twenty-one, dark, medium height, of a loving disposition, and fond of music and dancing. Primrose is twenty, tall, fair, domesticated. Violet is eighteen, fair, medium height, loving, brown eyes, fond of home and children.

DON'T SAY IT.

Don't say it out loud, if you think it!

"I'll never do that," or "do this."

Let life's wider, late retrospection

Convict you of judging amiss.

Let "eighty," grown wiser, it may be,

Retracing the years to "eighteen,"

Shall see, with new vision, Life's story,

Shall see all the way-marks between.

Don't say, man of iron, "No woman
Shall fetter my heart evermore,
Nor catch me with pink and white beauty
And feminine arts." Oh before
Have Solons made like declarations,
And then with a rose and a ring
Sworn to honour and cherish
Some fair little babyish thing.

Don't say, in your merry young manhood,
You never would rise in the night
At a small baby's cry for cold water,
Because after all, sir, you might.
Don't say, pretty maid, even softly,
You'll marry no widower—no,
Lest sometime, betrothed, you remember
Resolves that have melted like snow.

Prime housekeeping matron, don't say it!
"I'll never let dogs scratch my door;"
Ah! mother's have vowed just as strongly,
And yet there are scratches—a score
From four-footed friends of lost darlings
Who loved them and left them to you.
Perchance you may change, and some Fido
In time scratch the fairest paint through.

Don't say, mourner, beaten by sorrow,
That life one dark shadow shall be,
For side-lights shall bar the dim pathway,
And lamps from above shine for thee.
Don't say, wronged and angry one, "Never
Shall pardon bles wrong of to-day,"
For a week from the mighty Forgiver
May teach you at last that you may.

E. L.

GEORGE, ALFRED, ROBERT, and EDWARD, four friends, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. George is twenty-three, tall, dark, medium height, good-looking, brown hair, blue eyes, and fond of home and music. Alfred is twenty-one, dark, brown hair and eyes, good-tempered. Robert is twenty-four, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Edward is twenty, good-looking, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-two, thoroughly domesticated.

ROSAMOND, twenty, handsome, dark, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty, good-looking, in a good position.

A. D. G., twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

ANNIE, twenty, hazel eyes, fair, loving, medium height, fond of home, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two, good-looking, dark, tall, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

CLARA and MAUDE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen about twenty-three. Clara is of medium height, fair, blue eyes. Maude is tall, brown hair and eyes, good-looking.

LILY and BOSS would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-one, dark, fond of music and dancing. Boss is twenty-two, fair, of a loving disposition.

POLLY and MOLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-two and twenty-five. Polly is fair, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated. Molly is dark, fond of music and dancing.

CLARENCE E. and J. G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Clarence E. is dark, good-looking, tall, fond of home. J. G. is tall, fair, and fond of dancing.

ELIZA and JANE, two domestics, would like to correspond with two mechanics with a view to matrimony. Eliza is dark, good-tempered. Jane is twenty, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty-five and thirty, loving.

D. B. and B. S. L., two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies. D. B. is twenty-three, of a loving disposition, blue eyes. B. S. L. is twenty-one, tall, fond of home.

JULIA and TILLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Julia is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and children. Tilly is eighteen, fond of music and dancing.

WALTER and HARRY, students, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Walter is twenty, blue eyes, of medium height, loving. Harry is nineteen, good-looking, tall, fond of home and music.

JIM, PAUL, and FRED, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Jim is twenty-two, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition. Paul is twenty-three, dark, grey eyes. Fred is twenty-one, fair, medium height, grey eyes.

LOUIS and LAURA, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Louis is eighteen, loving, dark, domesticated. Laura is twenty-one, tall, fair, and fond of music.

ALFRED, twenty-four, fair, light hair, dark eyes, good-looking, wished to correspond with a young lady about eighteen with a view to matrimony.

BERTHA and ROSAMOND, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Bertha is twenty-two, tall, curly hair, dark eyes, loving, and fond of dancing. Rosamond is twenty-four, medium height, curly hair, blue eyes, good-tempered, fond of music. Respondents must be about twenty-seven, fair.

ELIZA C., twenty-two, and of a loving disposition, fair, would like to correspond with a young man. Must reside in London.

G. W. and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. G. W. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, medium height. Lily is seventeen, good-looking, fair.

M. D. and O. L., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. M. D. is twenty-four, dark, fond of dancing. O. L. is twenty-two, fond of home, fair.

NANCY, BLANCHE, and NELLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young men. Nancy is twenty, tall, dark, fond of home. Blanche is eighteen, tall, fair. Nellie is nineteen, hazel eyes.

A. S. and J. C., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. A. S. is twenty-two, tall, dark, J. C. is twenty-one, medium height, fair.

TARLINGTON, eighteen, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, of a loving disposition, dark.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MARTHA is responded to by—Charlie, twenty, tall, light hair, blue eyes.

ALICE by—Albert, nineteen, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

A. O. by—Alice.

HENRY by—Lillie.

EMILY by—Frederick, twenty-two, tall, dark, good-tempered, of a loving disposition.

M. J. by—Ada B., twenty-five, fair, tall, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

ALFRED by—Constance Eleanor R., seventeen, dark hair, blue eyes.

CHARLIE by—Loving Daisy, nineteen, tall, fair, fond of home, well-educated.

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